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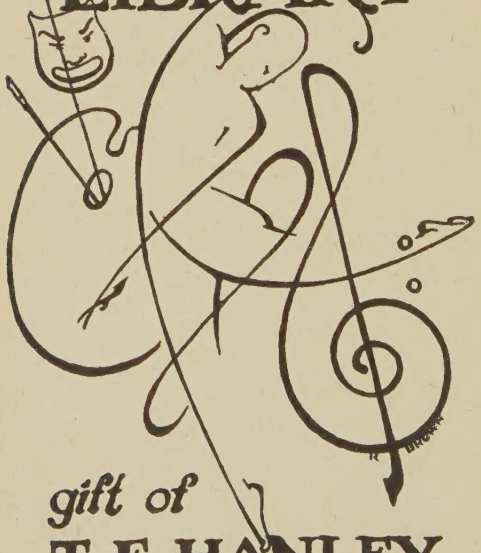

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STORIES *of the* GREAT OPERAS

MOZART TO THOMAS

BOOKS BY

ERNEST NEWMAN

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STORIES OF THE GREAT OPERAS · I
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STORIES *of the* GREAT
OPERAS

by

ERNEST NEWMAN

MOZART (1756–1791) TO THOMAS (1811–1896)

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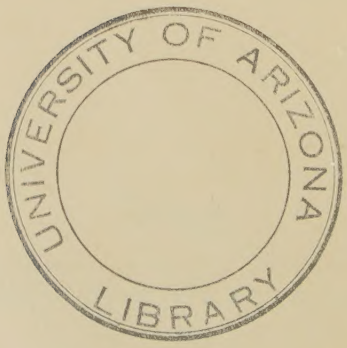

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STORIES *of the* GREAT OPERAS

MOZART TO THOMAS

THE composer whom we know to-day as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was baptised under the name of Johannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus. In the home circle he was always called by the name of Wolfgang, or one of its diminutives. In later years the composer retranslated the Gottlieb (the German equivalent, favoured by his father, of Theophilus) into the Latin Amadeus; and his usual signature to his letters was Wolfgang Amade. Occasionally, in his youthful letters, he would add to his signature his confirmation name, Sigismundus.

Mozart came of a line of respectable small-business people and mechanics in Augsburg. In October 1708 one Johann Georg Mozart, a bookbinder (1679–1736) took as his second wife Anna Maria Sulzer (1696–1766?); their eldest son, Johann Georg Leopold, born 14th November, 1719, became the father of the great composer.

Leopold was apparently destined first of all for the Church (he sang as a boy in the choir), then for the law, his education being seen to by the Benedictines of the Convent of St. Ulrich in his native town. This convent was affiliated to the University of Salzburg, and it was no doubt with a recommendation and a certain amount of assistance from the Benedictines of St. Ulrich that Leopold entered upon his legal studies at Salzburg in his eighteenth year (1737). He had already had some musical education, however, and music soon declared itself as his master passion.

In 1740 he joined the household of Count Johann von Thurn as a combination of musical and house servant. This mode of service

was common in Germany during the eighteenth century; almost every rich man's household had a number of servants who could also, when required, make music. In an age when public concerts were few, and when a composer could make little by the sale of his music, there were, roughly speaking, only three ways by which musicians could live, apart from teaching — by incessantly turning out commissioned operas, by occupying some public post (such as that of church or town organist), or by taking service at a Court or in the house of some rich patron of music. Haydn spent more than forty years of his life in the service of the Esterhazy family.

An interesting picture of the conditions under which these domestic musicians lived is given in the autobiography of Mozart's contemporary and rival, Dittersdorf. If the musician resided in the great man's house, as Haydn and Dittersdorf did, he wore his master's livery. Technically he was one of the house servants, and might have to take his meals with the others; but conditions in this as in other respects varied with the artistic standing of the musician and the courtesy, intelligence, and good feeling of the master.

The system seems to us now a degrading one, but it was not so regarded in the eighteenth century. In most cases the composers were better off under it than if they had had to throw themselves into the rough-and-tumble of the world. Their position was secure, the duties were not heavy, and, as some of the domestic orchestras were quite large ones for that time, men of talent had exceptional opportunities for mastering every detail of their art.

The Esterhazys, who were great Hungarian landowners, maintained an excellent orchestra in their country mansion, for which Haydn wrote a large number of symphonies, quartets, and other works.

Three years later (1743) Leopold's gifts as instrumentalist and composer obtained for him the post of fourth violinist in the Kapelle (i.e. the musical establishment) of the then ruler of Salzburg, the Archbishop Sigismund, Count von Schrattenbach. By 1758 he had risen to be second violinist, and in 1763 he became Vice-Kapellmeister. This was the highest rank he ever reached in

Salzburg, though he received also (in 1757) the title, and fulfilled the duties of, Court composer. He ended his days in 1787 in the service of the Court, and though during those forty-three years the post of head Kapellmeister became vacant four times, it was never given to Leopold. Among his other duties he had to teach the violin and the clavier,[1] and he was allowed to take private pupils.

Salzburg was a small provincial town with a rather low standard of culture; the inhabitants were notorious for their rough humour, and the official music was of poor quality.

In 1756, the year of his son's birth, Leopold wrote an excellent *Violin School,* which went through many editions during his lifetime and was still being reprinted in the early nineteenth century. He composed industriously, especially during his early manhood, but none of his music has now any except a historical interest.

On the 21st November, 1747, he married Maria Anna Pertl (or Bertel), a sensible, level-headed, humorous woman of twenty-seven, whose portrait shows that it was from her that Wolfgang inherited his inordinately large nose. There were seven children of the marriage, but five died; the survivors were Maria Anna (known in the family circle by the diminutive "Nannerl"), born 30th July, 1751, and Wolfgang, who was born on the 27th January, 1756; his birth almost cost his mother her life.

Nannerl became an excellent clavier player, and not only accompanied Wolfgang on his first tours as an infant prodigy but afterwards, by her teaching, helped to maintain the household. After two abortive love-affairs she married on the 23rd August, 1784, a Baron von Berchtold, of Sonnenberg, a man of forty-eight who had essayed matrimony twice already. Left a widow in 1801, she returned to Salzburg and supplemented by teaching the modest annuity her husband had left her. She died on the 29th October, 1829, nearly forty years after her brother; during the last

[1] This is a convenient general term for the keyboard instruments of that time other than the organ. It covers both the harpsichord and the pianoforte. In the second half of the eighteenth century the former instrument was gradually being superseded by the latter.

three years of her life she was quite blind. In character she is said to have taken after the father rather than the mother.

Leopold has been somewhat harshly dealt with by the majority of Mozart's biographers. He is accused of having exploited his gifted children for commercial purposes, and of having ruined Wolfgang's constitution by dragging him all over Europe as an infant prodigy, therefore depriving him of any chance of getting proper physical exercise — indeed, of anything that could be called a real childhood. The probability is, however, that Leopold honestly believed he was doing the best for his children.

His nature was narrow, but solid; he was rather bigotedly religious, and methodical in all his ways. In some ways he was a man decidedly superior to his surroundings. He had considerable native intelligence and a certain amount of culture, and it is evident from his letters that he was incessantly galled by the disagreeableness of his position as a Court musician in so unmusical a town as Salzburg.

He was the servant of people to whom he felt himself to be intellectually superior. Some of his associates in the Kapelle were coarse, illiterate, hard-drinking people, with whom he could not feel that he had anything in common. It was his sense of the unpleasantness and precariousness of his own position that made him anxious to secure a well-paid post for his son; and the only way in which this could be done was by letting the gifted child display his talents, both as executant and composer, in the larger European cities.

Leopold was of the nervous, hypochondriac type that, in face of continuous misfortune, runs easily to a fretful pessimism; his portrait shows us the face of a highly strung, worried, disappointed man. His view of his fellow-creatures generally was a disparaging one; he was always ready to attribute the worst motives to them, and was irrationally suspicious of, and unfair to, everybody who stood, or seemed to him to stand, in Wolfgang's path. " Men," he wrote to his son in 1777, " are all bad. The older you get, the more experience you have of them, the more you will realise this sad truth. Think of all the promises, all the fine talk,

and all the events that have come our way, and you will see for yourself how little human help is to be relied upon."

It soon became evident to Leopold that his little son had a most remarkable gift for music. He quickly learned to play the clavier and the violin, and while still a child began composing little pieces that had all the instinctive shapeliness that was so characteristic of his music in his maturity. Whether it was from choice or necessity it is difficult to say, but he took practically no part in the ordinary games and recreations of childhood. His absorbing passion from the first was music.

The Court trumpeter at Salzburg, Andreas Schachtner, who was an intimate friend of Wolfgang's father, furnished Nannerl, a year or so after the composer's death, with some interesting reminiscences of him as a child; they were perhaps slightly idealised here and there by the lapse of time, but must be substantially true. The child had an abnormally fine ear; Schachtner tells us that at the age of seven he declared, quite accurately, that there was a difference of one eighth of a tone between the tuning of his own violin and that of one he had heard a day or two before. From the first he was completely wrapped up in his father; the child's favourite saying was " After God comes papa."

He was barely six years old when his father took him and Nannerl on the first of their tours. This was to Munich, where they stayed three weeks (from the 12th January, 1762, to early in February), the children playing before the Elector. The second tour lasted from the 19th September, 1762, to January 1763; the main objective was Vienna, but calls were made at Passau, Linz, and Pressburg. The mother was of the party. The third tour of the family lasted three and a half years — from the 9th June, 1763, to the end of November 1766; the first part of it included, among other places, Munich, Augsburg, Stuttgart, Ludwigsburg, Schwetzingen, Heidelberg, Mainz, Frankfort, Coblenz, Bonn, Cologne, Aix-la-Chapelle, Brussels, and Paris.

They arrived in the French capital on the 18th November, 1763, and remained there until the 10th April, 1764, when they left for London by way of Calais, arriving in London on the 23rd

April. There they stayed until the 24th July, 1765, living first in Cecil Court, St. Martin's Lane, then in Chelsea, then in Five Fields (now Lower Ebury Street), then in what is now Frith Street, Soho. They were back in Calais on the 1st August, and made their way by slow stages through Lille, Ghent, the Hague, Amsterdam, Mechlin, and other places to Paris once more, where they arrived on the 10th May, 1766.

Two months later, on the 9th July, they left the capital again and made their way home *via* Dijon, Lyons, Geneva, Lausanne, Berne, Zürich, Donaueschingen, Biebrach, Ulm, and Munich (8th November), arriving in Salzburg towards the end of the same month.

Everywhere the children, and especially the precocious little Wolfgang, won the greatest admiration by their talents. Most of the performances were given before Courts or at great houses, but occasionally a public concert was ventured upon. Leopold, of course, was furnished with letters of introduction to influential people in most of the towns they visited.

Wolfgang showed himself to be a natural and very lovable child, behaving towards the great ones of the earth, from the Emperor of Austria downwards, with delightful unconcern. In addition to playing pieces from his studied repertory he improvised whenever requested to do so, and played or accompanied at sight. The Emperor having humorously suggested that he could not play the harpsichord with a cloth covering the keys, the boy did so without hesitation and without fault. Wherever he went he heard as much as he could of the music of other composers, and then and later showed the most surprising facility for entering into the spirit of the various national and personal styles, each of which left its mark for a time upon his own compositions; until his last years he was extraordinarily susceptible to influences, and did not disdain to learn from anyone who had anything to teach him.

Physically it was hardly the best life imaginable for a growing child, and when we take into consideration not only his exclusion from exercise and games and from the society of children of his

own age but the hardships and discomforts of travel in those days, it is no wonder that he occasionally had a serious illness. In Vienna, for instance, during his second tour, he was laid up for a fortnight with scarlet fever.

Leopold had been censured for compelling, or at any rate permitting, him to give a concert the day after his recovery; but it was probably a matter of sheer necessity for the children to earn money to cover the heavy travelling and lodging expenses of the family. Frequently, instead of receiving money from the master of the house at which they had played, the children would be rewarded with a watch, a piece of jewellery, or some similar present — beautiful in itself, no doubt, and very gratifying, but not of much use for the immediate payment of bills.

Leopold's advertisement in a Frankfort paper of 30th August, 1763, will give an idea of the nature of the tours as a whole:

" The general amazement aroused in all hearers by the cleverness, never before seen or heard to such a degree, of the two children of the Salzburg Court Kapellmeister, Herr Leopold Mozart, has led to the threefold repetition of what was at first meant to be only a solitary concert. It is owing to this general amazement and at the desire of various great connoisseurs and amateurs that another concert — positively the last — will be given this evening, the 30th August, in the Scharf Hall on the Liebfrauenberg, at 6 o'clock; not only will the little girl, who is twelve years of age, and the boy, who is in his seventh year [he was really in his eighth], play concertos on the harpsichord or the piano, and the most difficult pieces of the greatest masters, but the boy will also play a concerto on the violin, accompany on the clavier in symphonies, and, with the keys covered by a cloth, will play as well as if he had the keyboard under his eyes. Further, from a distance he will name exactly any note that may be sounded either separately or in chords on the clavier or on any other instrument, or on bells, glasses, clocks, etc. Finally he will improvise as long as he is desired to not only on the clavier but on the organ, and in any key, even the most difficult, that may be stipulated, in order to show that he understands also the

art of organ playing, which is quite different from the art of playing the clavier. Admission one small thaler per person. Tickets may be had at the Golden Lion."

During this Frankfort visit, by the way, Goethe, then a boy of fourteen, heard the youthful Mozart. Thirty-seven years later Goethe had a distinct recollection of the smartly dressed little fellow.

In each town, as we have said, Wolfgang eagerly studied the leading composers of the time and place, and in London he was particularly influenced by Handel and by Johann Christian Bach, one of the sons of the great Sebastian. We have an interesting contemporary account of him from the pen of the Hon. Daines Barrington, which appeared in the sixtieth volume of *The Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* (1770); it relates to the exhibition performances of Wolfgang in London in 1765:

"ACCOUNT OF A VERY REMARKABLE YOUNG MUSICIAN

"In a Letter to Mathew Maty, M.D., Sec. R.S.

"SIR,

"If I was to send you a well-attested account of a boy who measured seven feet in height, when he was not more than eight years of age, it might be considered as not undeserving the notice of the Royal Society.

"The instance which I now desire you will communicate to that learned body, of as early an exertion of most extraordinary musical talents, seems perhaps equally to claim their attention.

"Joannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus Mozart was born at Saltzbourg, in Bavaria, on the 17th of January, 1756.

"I have been informed, by a most able musician and composer, that he frequently saw the boy at Vienna, when he was little more than four years old.

"By this time he not only was capable of executing lessons on his favourite instrument the Harpsichord, but composed some in

an easy stile and taste, which were much approved of. His extraordinary musical talents soon reached the ears of the present empress dowager, who used to place him upon her knees whilst he played on the harpsichord. This notice taken of him by so great a personage, together with certain consciousnesss of his most singular abilities, had much emboldened the little musician. Being therefore the next year at one of the German courts, where the elector encouraged him, by saying, that he had nothing to fear from his august presence; little Mozart immediately sat down with great confidence to his harpsichord, informing his highness, that he had played before the empress.

" At seven years of age his father carried him to Paris, where he so distinguished himself by his compositions that an engraving was made of him. . . .

" Upon leaving Paris, he came over to England, where he continued more than a year. As during this time I was witness of his most extraordinary abilities as a musician, both at some public concerts, and likewise by having been alone with him for a considerable time at his father's house; I send you the following account, amazing and incredible as it may appear.

" I carried to him a manuscript duet, which was composed by an English gentleman to some favourite words in Metastasio's opera of Demofoonte. The whole score was in five parts, viz. accompanyments for a first and second violin, the two vocal parts, and a base. I shall here likewise mention, that the parts for the first and second voice were written in the counter tenor cleff; the reason for taking notice of which particular will appear hereafter.

" My intention in carrying with me this manuscript composition, was to have an irrefragable proof of his abilities as a player at sight, it being absolutely impossible that he could have ever seen the music before.

" The score was no sooner put upon his desk, than he began to play the symphony [2] in a most masterly manner, as well as in the time and stile which corresponded with the intention of the

[2] I.e., the instrumental introduction.

composer. I mention this circumstance, because the greatest masters often fail in these particulars on the first trial. The symphony ended, he took the upper part, leaving the under one to his father.

" His voice, in the tone of it, was thin and infantine, but nothing could exceed the masterly manner in which he sung.

" His father, who performed the under part in this duet, was once or twice out, though the passages were not more difficult than those in the upper one; on which occasions the son looked back with some anger, pointing out to him some mistakes, and setting him right.

" He not only however did complete justice to the duet, by fingering his own part in the truest taste, and with the greatest precision; he also threw in the accompanyments of the two violins, wherever they were most necessary, and produced the best effects. It is well known that none but the most capital musicians are capable of accompanying in this superior stile. . . .

" When he had finished the duet, he expressed himself highly in its approbation, asking, with some eagerness, whether I had brought any more such music.

" Having been informed, however, that he was often visited with musical ideas, to which, even in the midst of the night, he would give utterance on his harpsichord; I told his father that I should be glad to hear some of his extemporary flights.

" The father shook his head at this, saying, that it depended entirely upon his being as it were musically inspired, but that I might ask him whether he was in humour for such a composition.

" Happening to know that little Mozart was much taken notice of by Manzoli, the famous singer, who came over to England in 1764, I said to the boy, that I should be glad to hear an extemporary *Love Song,* such as his friend Manzoli might choose in an opera.

" The boy on this (who continued to sit at his harpsichord) looked back with much archness, and immediately began five or six lines of a jargon recitative proper to introduce a love song.

" He then played a symphony [instrumental piece] which might correspond with an air composed to the single word, *Affeto.*

" It had a first and a second part, which, together with the symphonies, was of the length that opera songs generally last; if this extemporary composition was not amazingly capital, yet it was really above mediocrity, and showed most extraordinary readiness of invention.

" Finding that he was in humour, and as it were inspired, I then desired him to compose a *Song of Rage,* such as might be proper for the opera stage.

" The boy again looked back with much archness, and began five or six lines of a jargon recitative proper to precede a *Song of Anger.* This lasted also about the same time with the *Song of Love;* and in the middle of it he had worked himself up to such a pitch, that he beat his harpsichord like a person possessed, rising sometimes in his chair. The word he pitched upon for this second extemporary composition was, *Perfido.*"

" After this he played a difficult lesson, which he had finished a day or two before; his execution was amazing, considering that his little fingers could scarcely reach a sixth on the harpsichord.

" His astonishing readiness, however, did not arise merely from great practice; he had a thorough knowledge of the fundamental principles of composition, as, upon producing a treble, he immediately wrote a base under it, which, when tried, had a very good effect.

" He was also a great master of modulation, and his transitions from one key to another were excessively natural and judicious; he practised in this manner for a considerable time with an handkerchief over the keys of the harpsichord.

" The facts which I have been mentioning I was myself an eyewitness of; to which I must add, that I have been informed by two or three able musicians, when Bach the celebrated composer [3] had begun a fugue and left off abruptly, that little Mozart hath immediately taken it up, and worked it after a most masterly manner.

" Witness as I was myself of most of these extraordinary facts, I must own that I could not help suspecting his father imposed

[3] I.e. Johann Christian — the " London Bach."

with regard to the real age of the boy, though he had not only a most childish appearance, but likewise had all the actions of that stage of life.

"For example, whilst he was playing to me, a favourite cat came in, upon which he immediately left his harpsichord, nor could we bring him back for a considerable time.

"He would also sometimes run about the room with a stick between his legs by way of horse. . . ."

"*Jan.* 21, 1780.

"On this republication of what appeared in the LXth volume of *The Philosophical Transactions,* it may be right to add, that Mozart (though a German) hath been honoured by the pope with an order of merit called the Golden Spur, and hath composed operas in several parts of Italy. I have also been favoured by Dr. Burney with the following account of one of his latest compositions.

"'Mozart being at Paris, in 1778, composed for Tenducci a scene in 14 parts, chiefly obligati; viz. two violins, two tenors, one chromatic horn, one oboe, two clarinets, a Piano forte, a Soprano voice part, with two horns, and a base di rinforza.

"'It is a very elaborate and masterly composition, discovering a great practice and facility of writing in many parts. The modulation is likewise learned and recherchée; however, though it is a composition which none but a great master of harmony, and possessed of a consummate knowledge of the genius of different instruments, could produce; yet neither the melody of the voice part, nor any one of the instruments, discovers much invention, though the effects of the whole, if well executed, would, doubtless, be masterly and pleasing.'"

On the whole the financial results of the first three tours were gratifying; Leopold found himself with a net profit of about 7,000 gulden, in addition to numerous watches, rings, snuff-boxes, and so on. The majority of these presents were sold in the later years of the family's need, but a few of them were retained and have

survived to our own day: a ring that was given to Wolfgang by the Empress Maria Theresa and another presented to him in Augsburg by the Prince Archbishop are now in the Mozart Museum in Salzburg.

With such a capital in hand, Leopold was willing, indeed anxious, to embark upon another tour as soon as opportunity arose. He thought he saw his chance in the summer of 1767, when he heard of the marriage, to be celebrated in Vienna towards the end of the year, of the Archduchess Maria Josepha and King Ferdinand of Naples.

The Mozart family left Salzburg on the 11th September, and arrived in Vienna on the 15th. Leopold's plans, however, were defeated by the death of the Archduchess, who fell a victim to smallpox on the 15th October. Leopold fled with his children to Olmütz to escape the dread disease, but both the boy and the girl were attacked by it, and Wolfgang was blind for eight or nine days.

It was not until the 10th January, 1768, that the family reached Vienna again. There they stayed for the remainder of the year, but the results of the sojourn did not come up to Leopold's expectation. The Viennese were more interested in pleasure and sensation than in music, and Wolfgang, being now of the age of twelve, was no longer a youthful prodigy and not yet a mature and established artist. Still he was of sufficient importance to be the object of anxious suspicion on the part of some of the professional musicians at Court and at the opera-house, and though we must never swallow whole everything that Leopold says about his son's colleagues and rivals, it is not improbable that intrigues were set on foot to keep the boy out.

At the desire of the Emperor, Wolfgang wrote an opera buffa, *La Finta Semplice;* but the impresario, Affligio, managed to postpone production week after week, and the work did not come to performance. A German comic opera, *Bastien and Bastienne,* had better luck; it was performed with great success in the private theatre of a Dr. Mesmer. Wolfgang met many musicians during this Vienna visit and heard a great deal of music, and was

particularly impressed by Gluck's *Alceste* and Piccini's *La Buona Figliuola.*

The family was back in Salzburg at the end of December, and on the 1st May, 1769, *La Finta Semplice* was performed by permission of the Archbishop in the theatre of the palace. The Archbishop also gave the boy the status of Konzertmeister, but without salary. The year was mostly spent by Wolfgang in study and composition.

The father's eyes now turned towards Italy, which was then held to be the land of music *par excellence;* a success there would launch the boy in Germany. Leaving the mother and Nannerl at home, Leopold and Wolfgang set out at the end of December 1769 upon the first of their three Italian journeys.

They visited, among other towns, Verona, Mantua, Milan, Lodi, Parma, Bologna, Florence, Rome, Turin, Venice, and Padua, returning to Salzburg on the 28th March, 1771. Wolfgang repeated his triumphs of the Paris and London visits; he played in public and in private, improvised, wrote music, was painted by the artists, was elected member of the renowned Accademia Filarmonica of Bologna, and received from the Pope the order of the Golden Spur, which entitled him to call himself " Cavaliere."

In Milan he had the powerful support of Count Firmian, the Austrian Governor-General (this part of Italy was at that time under the dominion of Austria). Thanks largely, no doubt, to Count Firmian's patronage, the boy received a commission to write an opera for the next season. The libretto chosen was Metastasio's *Mitridate Rè di Ponto* (*Mithridates, King of Pontus*). The opera was produced on the 26th December, 1771, with gratifying success, and was repeated some twenty times. On the strength of this triumph he received a new commission for an opera for the Milan Carnival of 1773, while the Empress Maria Theresa also commissioned from him a serenata for the marriage of her son the Archduke and the Princess Beatrice of Modena, which was to take place in October in Milan.

Father and son started on their second Italian tour on the 13th August, 1771, arriving in Milan eight days later. The libretto

of the serenata, *Ascanio in Alba*, was not ready until the end of August, so that Mozart had to compose the music in a fortnight. The wedding took place on the 15th October, and the serenata was performed on the 17th with great success.

Hasse, one of the most admired opera composers of the day, had had an opera performed on the 16th; the old man (he was seventy-two at that time) showed Wolfgang great friendliness during his stay in the town, and prophesied that " this boy will cause us all to be forgotten." Wolfgang and his father returned to Salzburg on the 16th December.

On the same day the Archbishop Sigismund died, to be succeeded on the 24th March, 1772, by the Archbishop Hieronymus, who rejoiced in the further name and title of Count von Colloredo-Wallsee-Mels; he was a man of about forty years of age. The disparaging portrait of him painted in the ordinary Mozart biography is not to be relied upon. He and the Mozarts came into violent collision during the succeeding years, and the sentimental tendency of the nineteenth century was to assume that Hieronymus was an ignorant and malignant tyrant who did all he could to make the life of Wolfgang a misery to him.

Modern German historians who are not the victims of musical prepossessions assure us, on the contrary, that he was a man of culture and character, who did indeed earn the dislike of his subjects, but only because of the energy with which he set himself to effect some much-needed reforms in the town.

The musical historians have taken their cue regarding him from Leopold's and Wolfgang's letters; but, as we have already hinted, Leopold's judgments upon men who did not serve his and his son's ends as he would have liked are not to be taken as gospel. The Archbishop soon made an enemy of him by placing first Fischietti and then Lolli above him as Kapellmeisters. Leopold thought his age and the length of his service entitled him to the chief post; but it seems probable that what stood in his way was his well-known misanthropic discontent with everything and everybody, and his complete inability to make himself agreeable to his colleagues, or to his superiors unless they were doing him favours.

Moreover, he was continually away on leave or asking for leave, and it must have been evident to the Archbishop and everyone else that his heart was not in his Salzburg work — that the one thing he lived for was the advancement of his son.

For the moment, however, matters seemed to go fairly well, and Wolfgang was commissioned to write an opera for the Allegiance Festival of the Archbishop. This work, *Il Sogno di Scipione* (*Scipio's Dream*), shows every sign of having been written to order. It was performed at the end of April 1772. On the 9th August Wolfgang, as Konzertmeister to the Archbishop, was granted the small salary of 150 gulden a year.

He and his father set out on their third Italian tour on the 24th October, 1772. They arrived at Milan on the 4th November, and on the 26th December his new opera, *Lucio Silla,* was produced. Leopold, in his letters home, speaks of the enormous success of the work; it was always his habit to paint Wolfgang's successes in glowing colours in order to impress the Salzburg Court and the local musicians. But the plain fact seems to have been that it was not to the Italian taste; certain it is that Mozart never again received a commission to write an opera for any Italian theatre.

The father and son returned to Salzburg on the 13th March, 1773, and apart from two absences, one for ten weeks, the other for three months. Wolfgang remained in his native town until 1777, producing an enormous amount of music in all *genres*. Leopold had heard that Gassmann, the Court Kapellmeister at Vienna, was seriously ill, and with an eye on the post for his son he took him to Vienna on the 17th July, 1773, remaining there till the 30th September. Gassmann died in the January following, but the vacant post was given to a Viennese musician, Joseph Bonno.

Once more Wolfgang seems to have fallen into a hotbed of intrigue. Vienna at that time was teeming with musicians, German and Italian, those who had good positions holding on strenuously to them, those whose positions were less good doing all they could to oust the possessors of the better ones. Dr. Burney visited Vienna in 1772, and his journal of his tour through Germany gives us an interesting picture of the town, that was then swarming with

composers, poets, librettists, singers, players, actors, and their hangers-on. Except that Wolfgang heard a great amount of new music, instrumental and operatic, the visit was of no practical use to him.

In the winter of 1774 he received from the Elector of Bavaria, Maximilian III, a commission for a comic opera for the Munich Carnival of 1775. Father and son left Salzburg on the 6th December, 1774, arriving at Munich the next day. The opera, *La Finta Giardiniera* (*The Feigned Gardener*), was produced on the 13th January with the greatest success. Leopold and Wolfgang were back in Salzburg in March. In April 1775 the Austrian Archduke Maximilian was being entertained in Salzburg, and on the 23rd Wolfgang's cantata *Il Rè Pastore* was performed as part of the festivities.

Between September and the end of the year Wolfgang wrote only three Masses — a very small output for a composer of his fertility. It is conjectured that his health was bad at this time; the so-called Bologna portrait of him, in which he is painted wearing the decoration of the Golden Spur, is very suggestive of illness. It may have been some spiritual as well as physical crisis through which he was passing that caused him to concentrate, in the latter part of 1776, on religious works.

At the beginning of 1777 Leopold seems to have felt more strongly than ever the necessity for establishing his now twenty-one-year-old son in some safe post or other. He applied to the Archbishop for long leave of absence, but this was refused him; it was no doubt felt that he had sufficiently neglected his Court duties during the last fifteen years.

The tour Leopold now had in mind for his son was a long one, and as the boy seems always to have been singularly incapable of taking care of himself, the father had to decide to let his mother accompany him. The pair left Salzburg on the 23rd September, 1777. It was with a heavy heart that Leopold said good-bye to them; it was the first time his son had been out of his keeping, and he had a foreboding of evil. As it happened, he was never to see his wife again.

This ninth of the Mozart tours is known as the Grand Tour. It lasted until January 1779, and was to prove rich both in experience and in disappointments for the young man. The route lay through Munich, Augsburg, and Mannheim to Paris, where they arrived on the 23rd March, 1778. There his mother died, after a short illness, on the 3rd July; Wolfgang considerately wrote to a friend in Salzburg asking him to prepare his father for the news that would reach him in a later letter. He left Paris on the 26th September, making his way home by way of Nancy, Strassburg, Mannheim, and Munich, arriving in Salzburg about the 8th January, 1779.

On his first passage through Augsburg he was greatly smitten by a young girl-cousin (known as the "Bäsle"), to whom he wrote some curious letters that have only recently been published in unexpurgated form.

In Mannheim, on his way to Paris, he stayed four months and a half. Mannheim at that time was a very small town, but it had the most remarkably efficient orchestra in Germany — which the boy had already heard in July 1763 — and it was the centre of a new school of instrumental composition.

Wolfgang learned a great deal from the Mannheimers, but was disappointed in his hopes for an official appointment in the town. It was here that he had his first real love-affair. Attached to the theatre in the dual capacity of bass singer and prompter was a certain Fridolin Weber, a man of forty-five years of age. He was living in exceedingly poor circumstances with a wife and four daughters — Josepha, Aloysia, Konstanze, and Sophie. (A brother of Fridolin, Frantz Anton, was the father of Karl Maria von Weber (1786–1826), the composer of *Der Freischütz,* who was thus the cousin of the Konstanze Weber who later became Mozart's wife.)

Aloysia in 1777 was seventeen years old, and already showing great promise as an operatic singer. Mozart fell in love with her, and it is to his passion for her that we owe one of the most remarkable of his detached arias, "Non so d'onde viene," the words of which are by Metastasio. From the correspondence between

Wolfgang and his father it is evident that the latter viewed the new situation with considerable anxiety; Wolfgang was plainly losing valuable time on Aloysia's account, and even planning an artistic tour with her in Italy. The distracted father told him peremptorily to be off to Paris at once.

In Paris Wolfgang profited as usual by the new music he heard, but materially had comparatively little success. He was no longer an interesting prodigy, and so had not the same vogue in fashionable drawing-rooms as he had had ten years before. He was received politely enough in fashionable circles, but the politeness rarely led to anything more substantial.

" It is true," he says in a letter to his father, " that people say all kinds of civil things, but there it ends, as they appoint me to come on such and such a day, when I play, and hear them exclaim, ' Oh! c'est un prodige, c'est inconcevable, c'est étonnant! ' and then, *Adieu*. . . . Besides, Paris is much changed; the French are far from being as polite as they were fifteen years ago; their manners now border on rudeness, and they are odiously self-sufficient."

He had some pupils, and no doubt could easily have had more; but he found it rather expensive taking coaches about Paris, and in any case he never had much liking for giving lessons to amateurs with no particular aptitude for music. He was offered an organistship at Versailles, but declined it; Versailles was so far away from Paris that he would have been out of the great world there, and thus liable to miss a better chance if it should come his way. He received no commission for an opera, and, all in all, could hardly with reason expect one. He was completely unknown in Paris as an operatic composer; his little local successes in Italy and Munich were unknown to the greater musical world of Europe. He wrote a little ballet *Les Petits Riens*, which was produced on the 11th June; the great Vestris and La Guimard danced in it.

For one of the Concerts Spirituels he composed his so-called " Paris " symphony in D major. As usual with him in his early years, he wrote in the taste of the town in which he happened to be

living, and on this occasion he hit off the French taste so well that the symphony was a great success.

A letter to his father describing the reception of the work shows us that the audiences of those days must have had the curious habit of applauding in the course of an orchestral work if a particular passage took their fancy. " Just in the middle of the *Allegro* a passage occurred which I felt sure must please, and there was a burst of applause; but as I knew at the time I wrote what effect it was sure to produce I brought it in once more at the close, and then rose shouts of ' *da capo!* ' The *Andante* was also liked, but the last *Allegro* still more. Having observed that all last as well as first *Allegros* here begin together with all the other instruments, and generally *unisono,* mine commenced with only two violins, *piano* for the first eight bars, followed instantly by a *forte.* The audience, as I expected, called out ' Hush ' at the soft beginning, and the instant the *forte* was heard began to clap their hands."

Durng his stay in Paris the town was torn in two by the quarrel between the partisans of Gluck and those of Piccinni. Mozart must have heard operas of each of these composers, and he profited in his own way by their example, without attaching himself slavishly to the school of either.

What Wolfgang's father wanted was to get his son back in Salzburg and fix him profitably there. But the one thing Wolfgang did not want was to return to Salzburg. He had hoped that the Elector of Mannheim would offer him a post; but no doubt the prudent Elector, though he knew Wolfgang's value as a composer, hesitated, as other rulers did, to place so young and physically insignificant a man in a position of responsibility. The Elector having become ruler of Munich, the Mannheim Court was transferred there, and with it, of course, the musical personnel. The presence of the Webers in Munich was another reason for Wolfgang's wishing to settle there.

In Salzburg, however, there had been changes during his absence. One of the Court musicians, Adlgasser, had died, and Leopold had managed to get the offer of a vacant post of Kapellmeister for Wolfgang. The latter hoped that the Archbishop would refuse;

but everything was arranged to the satisfaction of Leopold, who again and again pointed out in his letters to his son the solid advantages of the post. The united incomes of the family would enable them to live in comfort, while the central situation of Salzburg — within easy reach of Munich, Italy, and Vienna — made it an ideal centre of operations.

There was nothing for it but for Wolfgang to accept, and he made his way home in great discontent, taking, as we have seen, as long as possible over it. At Munich another disappointment awaited him. When he again met Aloysia, who by this time was laying the foundations of her great reputation as a singer, she plainly showed him that if ever she had had any real affection for him, nothing of it survived now. The Weber family was never noted for its refinement, and Aloysia especially wounded Mozart by laughing at his red coat, which was part of the Archbishop's livery.

He found a little consolation in a visit from his Augsburg "Bäsle," who accompanied him back to Salzburg. The future of this young lady may be told here. Born less than three years after Mozart, she survived him half a century, dying in 1841, at the age of eighty-three, in Bayreuth, in a household in which, apparently, she had been a servant of some kind. She had in 1793 an illegitimate daughter, named Marianne Victoria Mozart, who died in 1857. Descendants of the latter are said to be still living in Vienna.

Wolfgang arrived in Salzburg on the 17th January, 1779. He remained there until the autumn of 1780, producing a great number of works of all descriptions, including the choruses and entr'actes for a drama entitled *King Thamos,* and part of the music for a German opera, which was not performed, and to which the title of *Zaide* was given after his death.

He had received a commission for an opera for the Munich carnival of 1781, and to that town he repaired in November 1780. The opera, *Idomeneo,* was produced on the 29th January, 1781, with the usual success; it did much to establish his reputation as an opera composer in Germany, but had no enduring popularity. Mozart altered parts of it a few years later, apparently in view of

a revival that did not eventuate. It was put upon the stage in Dresden in 1854, but again failed to establish itself. It is rather curious that Mozart should never have been able to make an enduring success of an opera that was serious throughout; his greatest music was written for works, such as the *Seraglio, Figaro, Don Giovanni,* and *The Magic Flute,* in which the expression is by turns serious and humorous.

Leopold and Nannerl had been able to attend the production of *Idomeneo* owing to the absence of the Archbishop in Vienna, whither, seemingly, he had been called on political business. From Vienna there came in March a summons to Mozart to take his place there in the Archbishop's Kapelle. The stage was now set for the decisive scene in the drama of Mozart's life; within the next couple of months he was to break away from his father's control, throw from him the livery of a Salzburg Court musician, and enter upon that last decade of his life that was to be so glorious to him as an artist, and so full of disappointments and miseries to him as a man.

The Archbishop has been painted in the blackest colours by the older Mozart biographers for his share in these events of the spring of 1781. It was apparently overlooked that the only account we have of the affair is that of Mozart himself, in his letters to his father; and neither Leopold nor Mozart can be accepted as perfectly unbiassed witnesses where Salzburg and the Archbishop are concerned.

The later Mozart biographers try to do the Archbishop justice. His musical sympathies, it is true, were mainly Italian, but there is evidence enough that he really appreciated Mozart as a composer. From the Court point of view, however, both Leopold and Wolfgang were unsatisfactory servants. Both were notoriously discontented with the town and with their service.

During Mozart's later tours the father and son adopted, for safety's sake, a cypher for such passages in their letters as related to the Archbishop and to Salzburg; but their opinions on both subjects must have been perfectly well known in the town. Ever since Wolfgang had been of the age of six the Court had been

granting his father or himself leaves of absence, some of them of very long duration; and it was obvious to everybody that the object of these tours was to place Wolfgang advantageously in some other Court, both father and son using Salzburg only as a stop-gap.

During the *Idomeneo* period in Munich Wolfgang had once more overstayed his leave, and it seems likely also that the Archbishop had heard unfavourable reports of his conduct in the town, where he was enjoying himself as young men will who are just beginning to realise their manhood. The Archbishop and his officials would probably have put the matter in this way — that either Wolfgang should leave the Archbishop's employment, or, if he chose to remain in it, he should perform the duties of it in a proper way. Wolfgang, on his side, was conscious only of his expanding genius, of his cramped life in provincial Salzburg, of the social and financial attractions offered by larger cities such as Munich and Vienna, and of a vague desire for freedom that was not unnatural in a young man who had spent the first twenty-five years of his life in complete subjection to his father's will. The spirit of revolt was in him, and it needed very little to bring it to a head.

He arrived in Vienna on the 16th March, and took up his residence in the same house as the Archbishop. The latter's establishment consisted of his Chamberlain (Count Arco), a private secretary, a Comptroller, two valets, a Court Messenger, other household officials and servants, and a few of the Salzburg musicians.

The company dined at two tables, the place of the musicians being among the ordinary servants. At the top of this table sat the two valets; Mozart was at least placed above the cooks, but his pride was hurt at having to sit with the servants at all; it certainly must have been galling to a young man who had been fêted as he had been in great houses in so many cities.

He admits that he made no attempt to popularise himself; he took no part in the rough joking that went on at the table, spoke only when spoken to, and left the moment he had finished his meal. He saw opportunities of making money by playing at other

houses in the town, and was angry at having to miss them owing to his enforced attendance on the Archbishop. His letters to his father show that he rather prided himself on making it perfectly clear to everybody around him, from the Archbishop and Count Arco downwards, that he thoroughly disliked them and performed unwillingly such duties as he could not escape. He was beginning to be very conscious of his musical powers, and was convinced that if only he could win the favour of the Emperor his fortune would soon be made.

Early in April the Chamberlain told Brunetti, one of the household musicians, who passed the information on to Mozart, that the musicians were to return to Salzburg, for which travelling expenses by the diligence would be allowed them; but that those who wished to remain might do so at their own expense.

That the proposition was not an unreasonable one is shown by Brunetti's delight at the prospect of remaining in Vienna on these terms. Another musician, Ceccarelli, was less happy about it, as he was not so much in demand in Vienna as either Mozart or Brunetti; he was not anxious to leave the town, but he would try, he said, to get a living allowance from the Archbishop.

Wolfgang had no desire at all to leave Vienna; he was popular there, and was asked out so frequently that his expenses in the matter of food would not be great were he to remain. He took a deliberately provocative line. He told Brunetti that he would ignore the communication made to the Kapelle until he received a similar one from Count Arco personally, and when that happened, "I will then let him know my intentions." "Not a bad hint?" he writes to his father. . . . "Oh! I certainly mean to play the Archbishop a nice little trick, to my great delight, and with the utmost politeness, for it seems he does not know me yet."

When a servant — and after all, that was what Wolfgang was in the Archbishop's household — goes looking for trouble like this, he can hardly complain if he finds it. From his own point of view Mozart was perfectly right in cursing a state of affairs in which he found himself tied to an ill-paid post while he saw opportunities of making more money slip by him. From the officials' point of

view he was an undesirable servant who would neither leave his employment nor perform amiably the duties connected with it.

On the 28th April, writing to his father to announce his approaching return to Salzburg, he says, " I do entreat you, dearest father, to allow me to return to Vienna next winter, towards the end of carnival; this depends on you alone, and not on the Archbishop, for whether he thinks fit to grant me permission or not, I shall certainly go; no fear of its doing me any injury — assuredly. Oh! if he could only read this, it would be just what I should like! "

Before the next letter could be sent home the crisis had come. On the 9th May he writes to his father, " I am still filled with the gall of bitterness; and I feel sure that you, my good kind father, will sympathise with me. My patience has been so long tried that it has at last given way. I have no longer the misfortune to be in the Salzburg service, and to-day is a happy day for me."

Three times already, he goes on to say, the Archbishop had said the most insulting and impertinent things to his face; " he called me a knave and a dissolute fellow, and told me to take myself off." It seems that Mozart had originally fixed his journey for that very day, the 9th (Wednesday). In order to collect some money due to him, however, he had postponed the journey till the following Saturday.

When he went to see the Archbishop on the 9th, the valet told him that the Prince wanted him to take charge of a packet for Salzburg. Wolfgang asked if it was pressing, and was told that it was of great importance. " Then I regret that I cannot have the honour of being of use to His Highness on this occasion," he said, " for, owing to particular reasons (which I mentioned) I am not to leave here till Saturday."

The Archbishop lost his temper. " Then came all in a breath that I was the most dissipated fellow he knew, no man served him so badly as I did, and he recommended me to set off the same day, or else he would write home to stop my salary. It was impossible to get in a syllable, for his words blazed away like fire. I heard it all with calmness; he actually told me to my face the

deliberate falsehood that I had a salary of five hundred florins, called me a ragamuffin, a scamp, a rogue. Oh! I really cannot write all he said. Then my blood began to boil and I said, 'Your Grace does not appear to be satisfied with me.' 'How! Do you dare to threaten me, you rascal? There is the door, and I tell you I will have nothing more to do with such a low fellow.' At last I said, 'Nor I with you.' 'Begone!' said he; while I replied, as I left the room, 'The thing is settled, and you shall have it to-morrow in writing.'" The Archbishop naturally could not be expected to see in the young man before him the future composer of *Figaro, Don Giovanni,* and *The Magic Flute.* All he saw was a very unsatisfactory member of his household, who, as we have said, would neither leave his service nor perform with a good grace the duties he was paid to perform.

For a few weeks matters drifted on indecisively; apparently Mozart had not been formally dismissed, and, the fit of temper over, the Archbishop seems to have been willing to let bygones be bygones. Mozart, however, was determined to cut himself loose from Salzburg. There were plentiful signs now of his popularity in Vienna; he had received a commission to write an opera; he had several pupils, and could have had more had he wished to spend more of his time in teaching. The financial prospects were rosy. No one who reads his letters impartially can escape the conclusion that the young man was beginning to feel his strength, and was not too tactful in the way he let his detested employer see it.

His worried father again and again implored him to reconsider his decision, but in vain; Wolfgang was certain not only that he could maintain himself but that, if the Archbishop were to go to the improbable length of dismissing his father, he could maintain him also in Vienna. Leopold, with a wider knowledge of the world than his son, and knowing the latter's many weaknesses in the affairs of daily life, could not share this optimistic view.

Meanwhile Wolfgang missed no opportunity of making his intentions clear to the household. He prepared three memorials to the Archbishop, setting forth his desire to leave the service, but difficulties were put in the way of his presenting them; it seems

probable that Count Arco still thought that oil might be poured on the troubled waters. When at last Wolfgang pressed him a little too far, the Count, who, in his position as intermediary, had to stand the fire of both parties, lost his temper; from the indignant letter of Wolfgang to his father of 9th June, 1781, we learn that he not only refused to give the young man access to the Archbishop but helped him through the door with a kick.

Wolfgang showed a commendable anger over the affair, and for a few days kept threatening — to his father — that at the first favourable opportunity he would return Count Arco's kick with interest, even were it in the public street; but his rage, as usual with him, soon died down.

The breach with the Archbishop was this time, of course, final. Mozart would now have to face the world for himself, without even his father at hand to advise him. He is at pains to rebut the latter's suspicions that he is neglecting his work and pursuing a round of pleasures in Vienna; it is true, he says, that for a time he did surrender himself to the many distractions of the place, but that was because he was depressed at the thought of returning to Salzburg. He will now work hard, and everything will be for the best in the best of all possible worlds.

Perhaps even at this time he had another reason, which he did not disclose to his father, for wishing to leave the Archbishop's service and settle on his own account in Vienna. Fridolin Weber had died in October 1779, and the family had left Munich for Vienna, where Aloysia had obtained a good engagement at the National Theatre. The family was left poorly provided for, and in spite of the assistance received from the Court the mother had to let rooms.

Aloysia, in 1780, married Josef Lange, an actor and painter of considerable all-round culture; Frau Weber, who was an excellent business woman, made first-class terms of purchase with the husband. She was a vulgar, cunning, calculating, and not particularly sober woman, always with an eye to the main chance; and her next victim after Lange was Mozart.

From the 2nd May, 1781, Wolfgang had been living with the

Webers; he remained with them till September of that year, when his father insisted on his finding other lodgings. About the latter time he received a commission to write the *Seraglio;* his future seemed to be assured, he was one of the most talked-of young men in Vienna, he had an evident liking for the daughter Konstanze, and Frau Weber soon had the simple, easy-going young man in her toils.

The father got wind of the affair, and naturally thought it his duty to warn his son against possible complications; Leopold understood him better than any other human being did, and knew how unfitted he was to steer the ship of his life through difficult waters.

Wolfgang for a time keeps as many of the vital facts from his father as he can, but in December 1781 he makes a clean breast of the whole affair. He means, he says, to get married. His natural feelings are as strong as those of any other man, perhaps stronger than those of seemingly sturdier fellows than himself. He has remained ignorant of women so far because, in the first place, he has too great a sense of religion and too much honour to seduce any innocent girl, in the second place because, for prudential reasons, he has never resorted, as other young men did, to the women of the town. His inclination has always been towards domestic life; as his father knows, he is so little capable of looking after himself that from his youth upwards he has never been accustomed even to take charge of his own clothes or linen. He wants to marry not only from love but from a desire for domestic comfort.

" But now who is the object of my love? Do not be startled, I entreat. Not one of the Webers, surely? [Leopold never had a high opinion of the family.] Yes, one of the Webers — not Josepha, not Sophie, but the third daughter, Konstanze. I never met with such diversity of disposition in any family. The eldest is idle, coarse, and deceitful — crafty and cunning as a fox; Frau Lange [Aloysia] is false and unprincipled and a coquette; the youngest is still too childish to have her character defined — she is merely a good-humoured, frivolous girl; may God guard her from temptation! The third, however, namely, my good and be-

loved Konstanze, is the martyr of the family, and probably on this very account the kindest-hearted, the cleverest, and, in short, the best of them all; she takes charge of the whole house, and yet does nothing right in their eyes.

" She is not pretty — rather plain in fact, but has bright black eyes and a nice figure. She is not witty, but has plenty of sound sense. She is not extravagant; on the contrary, she has to dress very plainly, because when the mother has any money to spare she spends it on the two other girls. At the same time, though her clothes may be simple they are always neat and nice, and she is clever enough to make most of her things for herself. She dresses her own hair, understands housekeeping, and has the best heart in the world."

The news created consternation in the Salzburg household. Neither Leopold nor Nannerl was in favour of the marriage, and it is to be presumed that the father, in his letters, expressed himself in the most uncompromisingly unflattering terms about the Weber family, for no letters from him to his son after the 22nd January, 1781, have survived; Konstanze destroyed them all in later years. In deference to his father's wishes, however, Wolfgang left the Webers' house in the autumn of 1781 and took lodgings elsewhere.

Konstanze, of whom we shall have more to say later, was seven years younger than Wolfgang, having been born on the 6th January, 1763; she was thus in her nineteenth year at the time of the engagement. She survived her husband more than half a century, dying on the 6th March, 1842, having made a second marriage in 1809. The historians in general have treated her none too kindly. She seems to have been a simple, ordinary kind of young woman, reasonably intelligent and moderately musical; Mozart, who loved her greatly, dedicated a number of his works to her, though it is curious that he did not finish one of them.

The affairs of the Weber girls had been left in the hands of a guardian, who insisted on Wolfgang's binding himself by contract either to marry Konstanze in the course of three years, or, if he changed his mind, to pay her 300 florins a year for life. As soon as

the guardian had left the room, Konstanze took the paper from her mother and tore it up, saying she required no written contract from Wolfgang.

One gathers that Konstanze, like others of her family, was a little given to flightiness. Before the marriage we find Wolfgang writing to her in gentle protest against the familiarities she had permitted herself with a young dandy at a party, and during the later years, when she was taking a " cure " in Baden, his letters show that he was a little anxious about the company she was keeping. She was evidently somewhat inclined to flirtation. The wedding took place on the 4th August, 1782; Leopold Mozart's consent arrived the day after, together with a message of good wishes from Nannerl. There was never any love lost, however, between the two women.

For the remaining years of Mozart's life Vienna was his home, though he still made an occasional tour. During these nine years he occupied one after the other no less than twelve lodgings.

The *Seraglio* was produced on the 16th July, 1782, and with this he made his first real operatic success — a success, that is to say, extending beyond the first few weeks of the production. The text was by Gottlieb Stephan (" Stephanie the Younger "), the Vienna Opera Inspector.

As was the pleasant habit in those days of unprotected copyright, he had taken his subject from a libretto, *Belmont and Konstanze, or the Seraglio Seduction,* by one Christoph Friedrich Bretzner, who himself, seemingly, had stolen it from certain predecessors. This gentleman was so annoyed that he inserted an advertisement in a Leipzig paper in 1782, to the effect that " a certain person named Mozart in Vienna has had the audacity to misuse my drama *Belmont and Konstanze* for an opera text. I hereby protest most solemnly." The good man could not be expected to know that the " misuse," and this alone, would preserve his name for all time.

There were the usual theatrical cabals against the *Seraglio,* but they were powerless against the public enthusiasm. The opera was given fourteen times in 1782, and remained in the bill till 1783,

when the German opera venture (the *Seraglio* was written to a German text) came to an end in Vienna. It was highly popular in other towns also, and made a sensation in Prague that had the happiest results for Mozart, for it brought him later the commissions first for *Figaro,* then for *Don Giovanni.* Prague remained the town in which his genius was most fully appreciated, and he was never happier than when spending a few weeks there.

With his usual slackness in matters of business he would not put himself to the trouble of arranging a vocal score of the *Seraglio* for publication, though his father urged him to do so. It would certainly have been a commercial success. As it was, he let his opportunity go by, and one fine day in 1785 an unauthorised edition was brought out by an Augsburg publisher. The easy-going literary law of the time made piracy of this kind easy. Nor did a composer, except in Paris, receive royalties on his operas. The general rule was a lump sum down for the first performance, after which the work became the property of any theatre that bought a manuscript copy of the score for performance.

With the undoubted success of the *Seraglio* the ball seemed to be at Wolfgang's feet, and he looked forward to the future optimistically. In the late summer and autumn of 1783 he and his wife stayed some three months with Leopold in Salzburg, and the father visited them in Vienna in the spring of 1785; this was the last occasion on which he and Wolfgang saw each other. A child, Raimund Leopold, had been born on the 17th June, 1784, but it died on the 19th of the following August.

No further opera commission came to Wolfgang for more than three years after the production of the *Seraglio.* He was in great demand, however, in social and musical circles in Vienna, and in the absence of any work to do for the theatre he turned out a vast amount of music in various *genres* suitable to private or concert performance — concertos and chamber music of various kinds, including the six great quartets dedicated to Haydn (1785). In 1786 came a little play with music — *The Impresario,* the text of which was by Stephanie — and Mozart's best-known song, *The Violet,* set to words by Goethe.

In the autumn of 1784 he had become a Freemason, and for the funeral of a brother-mason he wrote, in the summer of 1785, his *Freemasons' Funeral Music*. His mind, which will probably ever remain, in its secret workings, a mystery to us, was running much on death at this time. Cheerful as he always seemed externally, he probably had a prevision of his own early death. A letter to his father of the 4th April, 1787 — the last he ever wrote to him, for the old man died on the 28th of the next month — shows us a Mozart we should hardly have suspected from his music.

" Since death," he says, " is, strictly speaking, the true end and aim of our life, I have during the last few years made myself so intimate with this true and best friend of man that his image not only no longer terrifies me but is something tranquillising and consoling for me. And I thank my God that He has granted me the happiness to recognise death as the key to this true felicity. I never lay myself down in my bed without reflecting that perhaps I, young as I am, shall not see another day; and no one who knows me can say that he ever saw me morose or melancholy." His later sufferings and disappointments were to break down, however, this serene philosophy of his.

The Austrian Emperor of the time, Joseph II, was an unusually enlightened man, but his taste in music, like that of the majority of the Viennese, was almost wholly Italian. His heart was not really in the growing movement towards a national opera, of which, with better luck, the *Seraglio* might have been the foundation-stone.

As we have seen, the short-lived official German opera in Vienna came to an end in 1783, and five years later the Italian opera that succeeded it also perished, owing mainly, no doubt, to political complications, war, and financial necessity. Mozart, though he would have preferred to write German operas, was not in a position to refuse the text of an Italian opera that was offered to him about July 1785.

The libretto was based on Beaumarchais's sparkling comedy *The Marriage of Figaro,* that had been first produced in Paris in April 1784, and had made such a sensation in Europe that no less

than twelve German translations of it appeared in 1785, the year in which it was first printed.

Mozart's librettist was Lorenzo da Ponte, an Italian adventurer (of Jewish origin) who after various wanderings had drifted to Vienna and made some sort of success as an opera poet. After many more wanderings he died in poverty in New York in 1838, at the age of eighty-nine, leaving little behind him but his memoirs, in which he chatters far too much about Lorenzo da Ponte and tells us far too little about Mozart. The new opera was produced on the 1st May, 1786. It had eight more performances during that year, and then disappeared from the bill until August 1789. An interesting account of the production has been left by the Irishman Michael Kelly, who sang the part of the lawyer Curzio at the first production.

In 1777 Mozart had made the acquaintance of a young singer, Josefa Duschek, who, though married, seems to have been generous in her favours to other men than her husband. In 1784 she had settled in Prague, where, as the consequence of the protection of a rich Bohemian nobleman, Count Christian Clam, she had been able to buy a charming little estate in the country near by.

The house — the Villa Bertramka — is for ever associated with the name of Mozart: it still stands in very much its original condition.

In January 1787 Wolfgang and his wife went to Prague to see the local production of *Figaro* by a troupe under the direction of the impresario Bondini; they stayed with Count Thurn, a music lover with whom Wolfgang was already intimate. He found the town *Figaro*-mad, and he received a great ovation when he was recognised in the theatre. Early in February he left with a commission for a new opera. In April he received the book of *Don Giovanni* from Da Ponte, and in September he was back in Prague, living in a state of ideal happiness, and working at his score in a little house in the garden of Bertramka. It was in this house that, according to the story, Frau Duschek locked him one day until he had carried out a long-standing promise to write a dramatic scena for her to sing.

The old legend that the overture to *Don Giovanni* was written on the eve of the performance, the orchestral parts arriving at the theatre only just in time, is now discredited. The incident that Konstanze described later, of her keeping her husband awake all night with punch and stories, must have occurred on the night but one before the performance, i.e. the night before the final rehearsal. Nor is Mozart's feat so remarkable as it looks at first sight. He was in the habit of composing whole works in his mind and retaining them in his marvellous memory till he could no longer delay writing them out; and there can be no doubt that everything in connexion with the *Don Giovanni* overture but the mere clerical labour had been done long before.

The first performance of the opera took place on the 29th October, 1787, with the usual success; and Mozart remained in his beloved Prague some weeks longer before returning to Vienna.

On the 15th November Gluck died in Vienna, and Mozart received the vacant appointment of " chamber musician and Court composer," but at a salary of 800 gulden in place of Gluck's 2,000. In the following May he received a visit from the seventeen-year-old Beethoven, who had come from his native Bonn to pursue his studies in Vienna, whence, however, he was recalled after a few weeks by the death of his mother. He received a few lessons from Mozart, and heard him play in public but not in private: his verdict was that Mozart " had a fine but rather broken touch — no *ligato*."

On the 7th May, 1788, *Don Giovanni* was given in Vienna, with sundry additions to the original score, made by Mozart out of complaisance for the singers; these additions are generally omitted in present-day performances. The opera was given fifteen times before the end of the year, then dropped out of the Vienna repertory; it was apparently too difficult for the easy-going Italianised taste of the Court and the town. It was revived by Schikaneder (the librettist of *The Magic Flute*) in November 1791 with a German translation; it is probably from these performances that we must date the deplorable tendency, that en-

dured until comparatively recently, to stress the comic element of the opera at the expense of the serious.

Mozart continued to pour out other works besides operas in his usual profusion; the three great symphonies — the E flat, the G minor, and the C major (the "Jupiter") belong to the summer of 1788, and a number of concertos and chamber-music works date from this time, as well as his additional accompaniments to *The Messiah* and other Handel works.

In April 1789 he accompanied the young Prince Karl Lichnowsky in the latter's carriage to Prague, Dresden, Leipzig, Potsdam, and Berlin, being greeted everywhere with the customary admiration and playing a great deal in public and private, but, as was the way with him, being too careless and having too little knowledge of men to make a financial success of his work, though he received handsome presents from the Saxon and the Prussian Courts. In Berlin the *Seraglio* was given twice in his honour. It used to be said that the King of Prussia offered him a Kapellmeistership at a salary of 3,000 thalers, and that Mozart, although moved and grateful, refused it out of loyalty to his own Emperor; but the story seems to be only one of the many legends associated with Mozart.

He was back in Vienna again on the 4th June, 1789, and now his epoch of greatest need and suffering began. With all his popularity, with all his colossal output, he found it difficult to make both ends meet. He always marketed his wares badly, and partly through the jealousy of the intriguing Italians at the Court, partly, we are compelled to believe, because in person he was insignificant and did not impress people as a man, he received no Court post sufficiently well paid to allow him to live on his salary.

Joseph II died on the 20th February, 1790. Mozart appealed to his successor, Leopold II, for the second Kapellmeistership and the post of music teacher to the young princesses, but in vain. His money troubles accumulated, and he was forced not only to pawn his valuables but to borrow from friends — his chief creditor was a certain Puchberg — and not only from friends but from usurers. Konstanze was away a great deal for reasons of health, and

Mozart, pinch as he would, found it impossible to provide for her " cure " and her pleasures in Baden and for his own modest necessities in Vienna.

Every now and then his native optimism reasserted itself — he would take more pupils, he wrote to Konstanze, or he would sell some more works, or he would write another opera, and all would be well with them again; but his health was now beginning to fail, and the net of evil fortune was drawn too tight round him for him ever to escape from it in his lifetime.

He went, on borrowed money, to Frankfort-on-the-Main in September 1790, knowing that the town would be full of important people for the coronation of the new Austrian Emperor in October, and hoping both for opportunities to make money by concerts and to advance his claims to a permanent post somewhere; but the material results were again slight, though *Don Giovanni* was staged as a compliment to him, and the musicians and the social celebrities of the town made the customary fuss over him. By the 10th November he was in Vienna again, no better off than before. In the same month he received an offer from Robert May O'Reilly, the director of the Italian Opera in London, to go there in December, stay six months, and contribute during that time at least two operas, serious or comic, at a fee of £300: we can account for his refusal of this offer only on the supposition of his ill health.

In the winter of 1789–90 he had received from Joseph II a commission for an Italian opera, and he had no choice but to accept the book of *Cosi fan tutte* from Da Ponte. The new work was given in Vienna on the 26th January, 1790, and though it ran to ten performances during the year it was more or less a failure. Contemporary criticism praised the music but was severe on the libretto, and time has confirmed this first judgment; *Cosi fan tutte* has never been able to keep the stage for very long, though whenever it is revived it gives the Mozart lover a special pleasure.

In March 1791 Emmanuel Schikaneder, a successful impresario who had shown that he thoroughly understood the popular taste, approached him with a suggestion for an opera on some " magic "

subject: the idea pleased Mozart, especially as the text was to be in German, and he accepted the commission for *The Magic Flute*. The opera was mostly composed between May and July, though the overture was not written out till the 28th September; it had of course been complete in Mozart's head for long before that. The first performance took place on the 30th September, 1791.

Meanwhile, for the festivities in Prague in connection with the coronation of Leopold II as King of Bohemia he wrote another opera, *La Clemenza di Tito*. Konstanze joined him in the Villa Bertramka, and the opera was produced on the 6th September. The Empress called it a *porcheria tedesca* (a dirty German mess), but even Mozartian well-wishers who did not share her anti-German bias were constrained to admit that the new work was a failure. Mozart's heart was probably never in the greater part of the work; his favourite pupil Süssmayr, to save his harried and ailing master's time, wrote the recitatives and perhaps other portions of the score. Mozart left Prague in the middle of September, deeply hurt by his failure.

In the preceding July a mysterious visitor had called upon him — a tall, thin, cadaverous man, who refused to give his name, but asked him to write a Requiem Mass, for which he would be well paid; a proportion of the fee was given him in advance. The strange messenger called on various occasions later to see how the work was progressing. He was merely the servant of an eccentric Count Walsegg, who had a mania for commissioning musical compositions and having them performed as his own; the Mozart Requiem he proposed to give in honour of his recently deceased wife.

These facts only came out later; Mozart never knew of the Count's existence. Grievously ill and unhappy and despairing as he was at the time, he became obsessed with the idea that the mysterious messenger was one sent by the Fates to announce to him his own impending death. This morbid obsession of itself aggravated the decline of his health; he wrote with difficulty, and the Requiem, left unfinished at the time of his death, had to be completed by

Süssmayr, who not only had a thorough knowledge of his master's intentions but wrote a hand singularly like his own. Walsegg had the work performed at Wiener-Neustadt on the 14th December, 1793, Mozart's authorship of it being acknowledged.

The Magic Flute was given for the first time at Schikaneder's theatre on the 30th September, 1791; the composer conducted the first two performances. On the opening night the reception was doubtful, perhaps owing to the incomprehensibility of the story; but the opera soon established itself in public favour, and had a run of more than a hundred performances. It was Mozart's first indubitable popular success.

But success had been too long delayed; Mozart was already marked out for death. His constitution must already have been basically weakened by incessant mental labour from childhood onwards and by the many serious illnesses he had had, and now the combined strain and privations and money anxieties of the last few months were to carry him past the resistance point. He was visibly changing for the worse, both physically and mentally; he, who had always been so cheerful in company, now seemed to take less and less pleasure in the society of his friends. A spring had snapped in him; he became nervous, moody, and self-absorbed.

The thought of death was always with him. Konstanze tells us that one fine autumn afternoon, after his return from Prague, she was walking with him in the Prater and trying to distract him, when he began to speak of death and of his conviction that he was writing the Requiem for himself. Tears stood in his eyes; and when Konstanze tried to turn him from these gloomy thoughts he answered, "No, no, I feel it too surely. I shall not last much longer."

Ill as he obviously was, Konstanze had no scruple in leaving him once more while she took her "cure" and her pleasure in Baden. She was summoned thence about the middle of November; Mozart was now confined to his bed, from which he never rose again. His mind ran on *The Magic Flute,* which he longed to hear again, and on the still unfinished Requiem.

On the 2nd December, the day before his death, the score and sketches were laid on his bed, and he and three of his friends made an effort to sing the lovely " Lacrimosa ": Schack took the soprano part, Mozart himself the alto, his brother-in-law Hofer the tenor, and Gerl (the first Sarastro in *The Magic Flute*) the bass. After a few bars Mozart found himself too weak to proceed; and once more the thought that the Requiem was his own death Mass brought tears to his eyes. That evening his sister-in-law Sophie Weber came to see him. " It is good that you have come, dear Sophie," he said to her; " you must stay to-night and see me die." In vain she tried to turn his mind from these thoughts. " Already," he said, " I have the taste of death on my tongue; and who will then be here to sustain my dear Konstanze if you do not stay? " Sophie got his permission to go and tell her mother that she would not be home that night; on her return she found Süssmayr with Mozart; the dying man was giving his pupil instructions as to the finishing of the " Lacrimosa." He bade the two women keep his death a secret until Albrechtsberger, his successor in the Kapellmeistership he had held for some time in St. Stephen's Church, had been told of it.

The doctor was sent for; he was in the theatre, and said he would come at the conclusion of the performance. When he arrived he saw that all was practically over, but he ordered cold compresses on the burning head of the sick man. Mozart became unconscious, but his gestures and his expression indicated that he was still, in imagination, working at the Requiem. About midnight he suddenly sat up and looked around him with dull, non-seeing eyes; then he sank back, turned his face to the wall, and slept. He died fifty-five minutes after midnight on the morning of the 4th/5th December, 1791.

The news soon spread in the town. Süssmayr stayed with the dead man, and the proprietor of a gallery of wax figures came and took a cast, which is now lost, of the face. A rich Dutch amateur, Baron van Swieten, with whom Mozart had been very friendly and for whom he had fulfilled several commissions, among them the rescoring of *The Messiah,* called on Konstanze,

recommended her to spend as little as possible on the funeral, and took his leave.

On the 6th December the plain coffin was carried through the streets on the shoulders of two men, followed by the faithful Süssmayr. At St. Stephen's Church a few others joined the procession, including, it is thought, Albrechtsberger, Lange, Schikaneder, Van Swieten, and Salieri; but the appalling weather — it was a day of storm and heavy snow — soon drove them all home.

The two bearers went on with the coffin to the cemetery that lay a quarter of an hour's walk outside the town; there they left it in the mortuary chapel. On the following day it was lowered into a common grave. It was not until 1808 that Konstanze visited the cemetery with the intention of erecting a cross over the grave; but by that time all hope of identifying the place of burial had long disappeared. It remains unknown to this day. The Mozart museum in Salzburg exhibits a skull, alleged to be that of Mozart, that was presented to it about 1842; but there is not the slightest reason to accept it as authentic.

Konstanze was granted by the Court a pension of $266\frac{2}{3}$ gulden — a third of Wolfgang's salary; and she seems to have maintained herself and her two children in fair comfort on this, by letting rooms, by concerts of her husband's works, and by the sale of his manuscripts. Only gradually, by all indications, did it dawn on her that she had been married for nine years to a great man; it needed the growing chorus of grief and admiration throughout Europe to convince her of this. In 1799 she sold the remaining Mozart manuscripts to the publisher André for 16,000 gulden.

Two years before that she had met Georg Nikolaus Nissen, the Secretary to the Danish Legation at Vienna: he was then a man about thirty-six years old. Apparently she lived with him for some time without being married, but their union was legitimised when he left in 1809 for Copenhagen, where the couple lived ten years. When he retired from the service he settled with Konstanze in Salzburg, about 1820, where he died in 1826.

The last few years of his life were spent in collecting the ma-

terials for the first real Life of Mozart: this was published in 1828. Konstanze had him buried in Leopold Mozart's grave and over *this* husband she placed a fine monument, removing Leopold's tombstone for the purpose. Nannerl, who was now the widowed Baroness Berchtold, was so angered at this that she cancelled the clause in her will directing that she be buried in her father's grave. Konstanze died at Salzburg on the 6th March, 1842, and the bones of Leopold, who could never endure her when living, had to bear her forced companionship in the tomb that was then Nissen's.

Two of Mozart's three children survived. The elder, Karl (17th September, 1784–31st December, 1858) dabbled in music for a time, but soon abandoned it for the career of an official. He lived mostly in Italy, and died in Milan. The younger, Franz Xaver Wolfgang (26th July, 1791–29th July, 1844) had a less happy life. His mother insisted on his being a musician, and he became a good piano player and a moderate composer. He was never able to emerge from his father's shadow, and seems to have been a disappointed man during the last years of his life.

If it is asked, in wonder, why Mozart, whose genius was recognised wherever he went, remained all his life so poor, it can only be suggested again that personally he was too unimpressive for any Emperor or Prince or Grand Duke to feel that it would be wise to appoint him to a post in which strength of character and an ability to hold one's own with men were required.

He was small in stature, the head disproportionately developed, and the nose excessively large. He had virtually no culture in the broad sense of the term, and there are no traces of any real interest on his part in painting, sculpture, or literature. His whole being was musical, and his brain must have been engaged almost without intermission in the production of music. He was very fond of company, and in congenial society was cheerful and lovable. There must have been a dark side to his soul, for he had suffered much; but he seems to have concealed it from everyone until near the end.

Perhaps he did not care to face unpleasant realities; it was one

of his father's complaints against him, and one of his explanations of his son's lack of worldly success, that he wanted to take everything lightly, becoming impatient when difficulties arose and turning his back on them as soon as possible instead of meeting and overcoming them.

Grimm, the experienced man of the world and shrewd judge of character, wrote from Paris to Leopold in 1778: "Wolfgang is too sincere, has too little energy, is all too easily deceived and too inexperienced in the ways that might lead to success. If he had half as much talent and twice as much adroitness I should not be anxious about him." Knowledge of men and of the world he never acquired. He was not the man to fight intriguers with their own weapons, and intrigue there certainly was in Vienna, though the amount of it has probably been exaggerated; even Mozart himself came to believe, in his last days, that he was being poisoned by his rival Salieri, who was the favourite composer of Joseph II.

He was very fond of dancing, ninepins, and billiards, of good cheer, and of the society of pretty women. The frail little body seemed to be in need of constant motion; observers noted that when he was talking his hands were always moving or playing with some object such as his watch, or a ring, or part of his clothing. His tongue, on occasion, could be sharp, and we gather that his frank criticisms of some of his contemporaries did not help to endear him to them; he could be very satirical when he liked. But the basis of his character was gentleness, cheerfulness, honesty, and the desire both to love and to be loved.

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO

[Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart]

TO understand fully Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* it is necessary to have some acquaintance with the preceding drama, *The Barber of Seville,* which has been described in full in Part II of this work.

The action of *The Marriage of Figaro* takes place some years later at the Count's château of Aguas-Frescas, in the country near Seville. Figaro has been taken into the Count's service as valet and confidential man, and at the time the play opens is in love with the Countess's maid, Suzanna. The Count, however, is no longer as passionately in love with Rosina as he was; he has not given up his habits of gallantry, but he has turned his attentions to the girls of the neighbourhood. In virtue of his position as a feudal lord he possesses the mediæval right of the *droit du seigneur* — i.e. the right to possess a female vassal before she becomes the wife of another servant. Although he has relinquished this right, he would not be unwilling to exercise it in the case of the pretty Suzanna, who is shortly to be married to Figaro.

Political and social affairs in Paris at the time when Beaumarchais produced his two comedies were, though no one had yet realised it, already heading for a revolution. The Court was held in contempt even by the nobles, while the people disliked both impartially. The philosophers, headed by Voltaire and Rousseau, had done a great deal to undermine the old ideas on which the French State rested, and high society was largely liberal in opinion, if not exactly democratic. The extraordinary vogue of *Figaro* was

due to the fact that it summed up, in one brilliant work, all that was in the minds of those who felt it was time a new régime replaced the old.

As a recent French author has put it: "There came a day when the whole of the feelings of every kind, moral, political, and social, that had been developed in men's hearts by the writings of the philosophers — the joy of life, thirst for enjoyment, intense intellectual excitement, hatred and scorn of the present with its abuses, its traditions, hope and need for *something else* — found vent in one unique explosion; this day of intellectual frenzy, when the society of the *ancien régime* applauded the ideas that were ultimately to bring it to ruin, was the day of the first performance of *The Marriage of Figaro* (27th April, 1784)." And *Figaro* was the sequel to *The Barber of Seville*.

The second play would have followed the first one earlier, but for three years the authorities refused permission to perform it, so dangerous did the King, the censor, and the police judge it to be. The news of the ban on the work only excited public curiosity the more; and when at last *Figaro* was given, its success was enormous. The witty insolence of Figaro to his aristocratic master was a symbol of the coming upheaval. *Figaro* was one of the most potent of the influences that led to the Revolution, as Napoleon recognised some years afterwards.

ACT I

When the curtain rises, Figaro is seen measuring the floor and walls of a partially furnished apartment, while Suzanna, before a mirror, tries on a hat. Figaro is trying to discover the best place for the bed that the Count has sent them as a wedding present. But Suzanna, who is quicker-witted than Figaro, has divined the intentions of their master. She will not have this room for their bedroom, in spite of Figaro's demonstration of its convenience as regards the fulfilment of their respective duties. The room lies between that of the Count and that of the Countess. Does the latter require Suzanna some night? All she has to do is to ring,

and the maid is there in a moment. Does the Count require Figaro? Good; another bell tinkles, and the valet is there in a trice.

For a man of his experience, especially of the Count's love-affairs, Figaro is singularly obtuse. Suzanna enlightens him. Suppose some day the Count packs Figaro off miles away on some business or other. If, as Figaro has said, it is only three steps from their room to the Count's, does he not realise that it is also only three steps from the Count's room to theirs?

Figaro is at first incredulous, but in the end Suzanna leaves him in no doubt as to the Count's intentions, a hint of these having already been thrown out to her through the Count's intermediary, the same Basilio whom we have seen at work in *The Barber of Seville*. The Count, Suzanna tells Figaro, has indeed been generous to her in the matter of a dower, but hardly disinterested; he has his eye on the *droit du seigneur*. "But," says Figaro, "I thought he had renounced this feudal right." "True," replies Suzanna, "but Figaro's bride-to-be has caused him to repent of the renunciation."

The Countess's bell rings, and Suzanna flies to answer it. Figaro turns the matter over in his mind; now he sees the Count's object in taking him and his bride to London, where he has been appointed Spanish minister. Figaro has always regarded himself as the Count's superior in intelligence, and now he will prove it to him. This resolution he expresses in the aria "Se vuol ballare, signor contino" ("If you want to dance, my little Count, very well, I will play the guitar for you. Come to my school, and I will teach you how to caper. But I will be crafty until I have upset your little scheme").

As he leaves the stage Dr. Bartolo enters, accompanied by his elderly housekeeper Marcellina. Bartolo has never forgiven Figaro for helping the Count to cheat him of Rosina. Now a chance for revenge has come. Marcellina is in love with Figaro, who owes her money; and she has a plan by which Suzanna is to be induced to reject the Count's attentions, whereupon, in his anger, he will favour Marcellina's scheme for marrying Figaro. In an

aria that is masterly in its characterisation, Bartolo declares his resolve to use all his cunning to bring this about. When he has left the stage, there follows a duet between Marcellina and Suzanna, in which the former, already tasting victory in imagination, tries to score off her young rival, but is badly worsted in the duel of feminine malice.

As the discomfited old lady leaves in a huff, Cherubino enters. He is the Count's page — still hardly more than a child in years, but in his precocious passion for the other sex a worthy follower of his master. He is in trouble. The preceding night the Count had found him alone with Barbarina, the gardener's daughter, and dismissed him; for the Count is scrupulous enough where other people's morals are concerned. Cherubino's only hope is in the intercession of his godmother, the Countess. The charming young rascal appeals craftily to Suzanna, who has the ear of her mistress; if he is sent away, he says, he will never see his dear Suzanna again; but it soon becomes evident that he is in love also with the Countess herself.

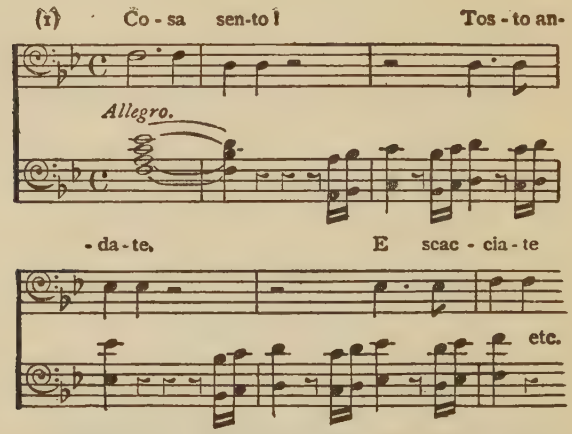
Learning that the ribbon in Suzanna's hand belongs to her mistress's bed-cap, Cherubino snatches it from her, giving her in place of it the latest canzonetta he has composed. Not only the Countess and Suzanna and Barbarina but every woman in the world ought to hear it, he says; and he pours out his views on love in the charming aria " Non so più cosa son, cosa faccio." The music paints enchantingly the amorous flutterings of this youth, who is the prey of delightful emotions that he himself hardly understands. He feels a desire, he says, he cannot express. At the sight of a woman his heart palpitates; now he burns, now he freezes. Asleep or awake it is all the same; in both states his mind and his tongue are running upon love. He confides the troubles of his soul to the lakes, the mountains, the shades, the flowers, the fountains, the air, the winds, the echo; and if there is no one and nothing to listen to him, he will talk to himself of love. The exquisite music is a perfect expression of the vague emotions of a heart too young as yet to know itself in matters of sex.

The Count is heard approaching, and Cherubino, who, after the escapade of the night before, does not wish to be caught in intimate conversation with another pretty girl, hastily hides behind the big armchair. The Count, seating himself in the chair, asks the cause of Suzanna's obvious confusion. He has come to tell her his plans. Basilio, he supposes, has already hinted at his intentions; now he wants her to meet him in the garden that same evening. Before he has time to explain himself more clearly the voice of Basilio is heard. Like Cherubino, the Count feels that the situation may easily turn out an embarrassing one, so he in turn makes to hide behind the armchair; Cherubino, seeing this move, abandons his own place of refuge to the Count, and slips into the big chair, where Suzanna covers him with one of her mistress's dresses.

Basilio asks Suzanna if she has seen the Count, for whom Figaro is looking. " If that be so," says Suzanna pointedly, " Figaro is looking for one who, after yourself, hates him most." The Count is curious to see how Basilio will do his work as procurer. When Suzanna holds up her hands in horror at the suggestion that she should meet the Count's advances half-way, Basilio ventures on the sly surmise that he would have thought she would prefer such a lover, a rich and powerful gentleman, to a mere youngster like Cherubino. He maliciously hints that he has seen the page prowling round this very room to-day. And was that little song, he asks, intended for her or for the Countess? The young man really ought to be careful to control his eyes when they are all at table, for if the Count caught him looking at the Countess as he sometimes does there would be trouble; he is, he protests, only repeating what the whole neighbourhood is saying. This is too much for the Count, who now reveals himself.

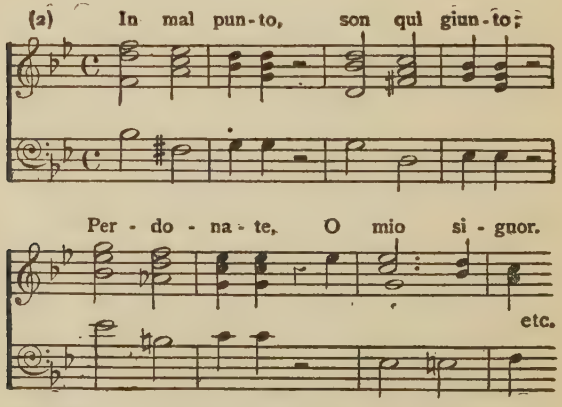
The situation has thus worked up to one of those ensembles that moved Mozart to put forth the whole power of his genius. He defines psychologically each of the characters in an opening phrase, and then proceeds to evolve from this material a masterpiece of easy, flowing expression. The phrase of the Count, with

its angry strides in the strings, shows us the outraged grandee determined to assert himself:



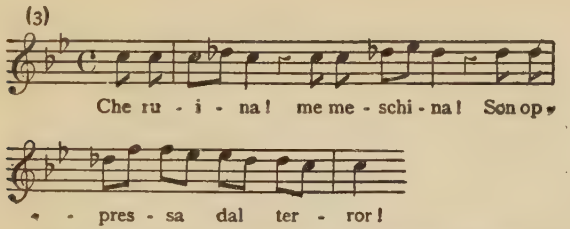
("Now I see it! Go at once and turn the seducer away.")

Basilio answers him in a deprecating phrase that suggests to perfection the oily cunning of the man:



("I arrived at an unfortunate moment; pardon me, my lord.")

Suzanna's phrase is all agitation:



("What a disaster! Poor wretched me! I am overcome with terror!")

Suzanna is on the point of fainting. The two men attempt to place her in the armchair, but the mere suggestion is enough to cure her of her faintness.

The Count swears he will punish Cherubino, against whom he has now a double grievance — that little affair with Barbarina, and his daring to cast sheep's eyes at the Countess. The Count tells how he called at the gardener's house and found the door bolted; when Barbarina opened it his suspicions were aroused; he looked around the room, drew the cover from the table, and there, underneath, was the page! Suiting the action to the word, he lifts the dress from the chair, and of course exposes Cherubino, to his own astonishment, to the horror of Suzanna, and to the malicious delight of Basilio. It may be noted that when the Count describes his own cleverness in discovering the boy, he does so to phrases that are modelled upon the sly theme (quoted above) that was formerly given to Basilio.

All this, however, has in one way played into the Count's hands. Having, as he thinks, caught Suzanna out in an intrigue, he means to use his knowledge for his own purposes. He orders Basilio to bring the deceived Figaro to see for himself. Suzanna, however, begs to be allowed to explain. She tells how the page came to ask her to intercede for him with the Countess, and how, frightened at the Count's coming, he hid behind the chair, and from there slipped into the armchair. The explanation is not wholly agreeable to the Count, who now realises that his own advances to Suzanna must have been overheard; and he is not

pacified by Cherubino's naïve assurance that he tried his very hardest *not* to hear anything.

Peasants enter, followed by Figaro with a bridal veil in his hand. The chorus sing the praises of their master, and Figaro asks him to place the veil upon the bride's brow in token of his gracious favour on this their wedding-day. Figaro's purpose is a subtle one; he wants to involve his master in a public admission that he has renounced the *droit du seigneur*. The Count graciously promises them his protection, and says he will give the bride the veil later, at a more imposing ceremony than this. The one person not partaking in the general jubilation is poor little Cherubino. The Count begins once more to express his disapproval of him, but a discreet little hint from the page as to his ability to keep his mouth shut makes the Count remember that to some extent he is in the boy's power. He ostentatiously pardons him; but he appoints him to an ensign's post that has just fallen vacant in his regiment, and the boy must join at once. Figaro, on behalf of the company, takes humorous leave of him in the aria " Non più andrai "; his days of love-making, he says, are over; now he will have to devote himself to the serious business of life among his warlike companions. The whole aria is couched in a delightfully mock-heroic vein.

ACT II

The first scene of the second act shows the Countess sitting in her room musing upon her happy romantic past and unhappy loveless present. Suzanna enters, followed by Figaro, and the three discuss the situation. Figaro has had a bright idea; without consulting anybody, he has sent to the Count an anonymous letter warning him of an assignation the Countess is alleged to have made with an admirer for that very night. The scheme rather frightens the Countess, who knows how jealous her husband is; but Figaro assures her that it is precisely his jealousy that will make him walk into the trap.

Suzanna is to give the Count a rendezvous in the garden, but her place will be taken by Cherubino dressed in girl's clothes.

The Countess will surprise her husband there, and reduce him to a condition in which he will be glad to promise anything she asks. The Count is at present out hunting, and meanwhile Cherubino must be rehearsed in his new rôle. Figaro goes to find him; before he leaves he sings an ironic fragment from that previous song of his in which he swore to make the Count dance to his tune.

When Cherubino enters, he is first of all prevailed upon by the Countess to sing his new canzonetta, the subject of which is, of course, love ("Voi che sapete"); the song is obliquely directed to the Countess, who, on her side, has a tender feeling for the boy.

First taking the precaution to lock the door, Suzanna proceeds to dress him in clothes of her own. He produces his ensign's commission, and the Countess notices that it has not yet been sealed. As Suzanna turns up his sleeves, the stolen ribbon is revealed. The Countess feels it her duty to chide him for his presumption, but is moved, in spite of herself, at this little incident, which gives her an insight into the page's feelings towards her. The atmosphere grows more and more tender, and Cherubino seems to be on the point of an avowal that may be rather awkward, when a knock is heard at the outer door.

It is the Count. The terrified Cherubino runs into the inner room, and the Countess opens the outer door. The Count's suspicions, that have already been aroused by the anonymous letter, are heightened by the evident confusion of his wife. To make matters worse, Cherubino overturns a chair, and the Count demands to be told who is in the other room. The flurried Countess replies that it is Suzanna, who, as a matter of fact, is hiding in an alcove. In an expressive little trio the Count calls upon Suzanna to answer him, the Countess bids the supposed Suzanna not to reply, while Suzanna herself comments quietly upon the situation and its possibilities of danger. The Count sees the wisdom of not making a scene before the household by calling the servants to break in the door, and goes out to get tools with which to do it himself, first of all locking each of the inner doors, and, by way of complete precaution, taking the Countess with him.

Suzanna now emerges from her hiding-place and calls upon Cherubino to unlock the door from the inside. The boy is thoroughly scared, and to avoid meeting the Count he jumps out of the window into the garden; Suzanna takes his place in the Countess's room. The Countess, of course, does not know what has happened during her absence, and when she returns with the Count she thinks it better to make a clean breast of the innocent affair. There is no need, she tells him, to break open the room, the only person in it being Cherubino, a mere boy, of whom it is absurd for him to be jealous.

In a sense the Count is relieved; but his temper is not improved by finding that once more he has been led into an absurd and embarrassing situation by the page. Swearing vengeance on Cherubino, he draws his sword and opens the door, only to be confronted by Suzanna. The Count is flabbergasted; the Countess is astonished but relieved; and Suzanna seizes the opportunity to twit her master over his mistake. The desperate man goes into the room to see if, after all, Cherubino is not concealed there; and Suzanna seizes the opportunity to whisper to the Countess that the boy has escaped.

The pair now hold the Count in the hollow of their hands. The Countess assumes the rôle of the falsely suspected wife, and is with seeming difficulty persuaded to take her reprobate husband back into favour. As the two women think they are mistresses of the situation, they do not mind telling the Count that the letter about which he now enquires was written by Figaro. For a moment he talks about revenging himself on his valet; but he is persuaded to forgive him, and everything seems set for an all-round reconciliation, with the repentant Count once more anxious to become the lover of his wife as in the old days.

With a dramatist less resourceful than Beaumarchais and a musician of less genius than Mozart, the scene, that has already been so rich in incident, would by now have attained its climax. Both Beaumarchais and Mozart, however, are really only just beginning. The dramatist gives several still more ingenious turns to the intrigue, while Mozart enters upon a finale that is unsur-

passed, even among his own ensembles, for appositeness and variety of expression.

The new development begins when Figaro enters and asks the Count to come to the wedding festivities, where his vassals are waiting to greet him. The Count, still sore at his rebuff, and still with a lingering suspicion at the back of his mind, shows him the anonymous letter and asks him if he knows who wrote it. Figaro, who is of course ignorant of what has gone on during the preceding scene, denies all knowledge of it. For a moment the Countess and Suzanna save the situation once more; they give him a dexterous hint that they have already told the Count the truth, and advise him not to be so silly as to deny it. Again the Count feels himself to be worsted; his one desire now is to delay the marriage proceedings, and his only hope, he sees, is Marcellina.

Just then a new complication arises. The gardener Antonio enters, half tipsy, and holding a damaged pot of carnations in his hand. He is very angry; people are always annoying him, it seems, by throwing things out of the windows on to his flower-beds, but now the limit has been reached — they have thrown out a man. Again the Count dimly begins to suspect that there is more in all this than he has been told, while Suzanna and the Countess, scenting danger, surreptitiously exhort Figaro to be on the alert. As the gardener tells his story of the man who alighted on the flowers and then ran away, Suzanna manages to whisper to Figaro that it was the page.

When Antonio confesses to the Count that he cannot describe the appearance of the runaway, Figaro boldly asserts that it was he who jumped out of the window. Even Suzanna and the Countess are staggered by the fertility and the impudence of his invention. The Count has his doubts, however, and these are increased when Antonio naïvely asks Figaro how it is he has grown so tall since his jump, for the person he saw seemed to him more of a boy. The Count ejaculates "Cherubino!" "Oh," says Figaro, "as for Cherubino, no doubt he has returned on horseback from the town." The bucolic mind of Antonio takes this quite literally, and explains that he saw no horse when the man jumped from the balcony.

Through all this cross-talk and muddle the Count adheres to his resolve to have an explanation. He fastens upon Figaro and asks him why he jumped out of the window. " For fear of you," replies the valet; he was in the room, he says, with his Suzanna, when he heard the Count outside, and his conscience having smitten him in the matter of the anonymous letter, out he jumped, twisting his ankle in doing so; the Count can see for himself that he now limps. But there is yet another hurdle to be got over. Just as Figaro is pluming himself on having wriggled out of this little difficulty, Antonio produces a paper which he had picked up in the garden, and asks if this is his. The Count takes it before Figaro can get hold of it, and finds it to be the page's commission.

The cornered Figaro has to play for time; he rummages in his pockets and pretends to be trying to remember what papers should be there. But the Countess has recognised the paper, and she passes the word on to Suzanna, who in turn whispers it to Figaro. He remembers now that it is Cherubino's commission, which the boy had left with him. But once more he is thrown into confusion by the Count's asking him why. He manages to stammer out " It needed . . . ," and is very grateful for the whisper from Suzanna that it needed sealing. Again the Count has to admit that he has been checkmated. He tears up the paper in a rage. Marcellina, Bartolo, and Basilio enter and claim justice in the matter of Figaro's promise to marry the lady. The distracted Count again and again bids them all be silent: he will try the case in quiet and see that justice is done. The act ends with a septet in which each of the characters comments on the situation from his own point of view.

ACT III

In the third act the intrigue becomes so rapid and so involved that it can be carried on only by a liberal use of recitative, there being hardly time every now and then for music to spread its wings. The first scene shows a hall decorated for the wedding festivities. The Count is turning over in his mind the puzzling incidents of the second act; he feels that he has been duped, and

yet can hardly believe it, for he is sure of the discretion of the Countess, while he can hardly conceive that any of his vassals would dare to take such liberties with so great a lord as he. Suzanna and the Countess enter in the background, and it is arranged between them that the latter will impersonate Suzanna at the rendezvous in the garden.

The Countess having retired, the Count accosts Suzanna; he is unable to rid himself of the suspicion that she has told his wife of his *droit du seigneur* designs; if she has, he will have his revenge by making Figaro marry Marcellina. The pair fence with each other; but in the end Suzanna promises to meet him in the garden that night, and they sing the exquisite duet "Crudel! perchè finora farmi languir così?"

Sure of victory now, Suzanna makes the mistake of saying softly to Figaro, when he enters, "You have won your case without a lawyer." The Count overhears her, and realises once more that he is being played with. He expresses his anger in a vigorous aria, "Vedrò, mentr'io sospiro." It is the business at this point of the actor who is playing Almaviva to lift the opera out of the light comedy vein in which the bulk of it has been played so far. This aria is the counterpoise to Figaro's "Se vuol ballare" in the first act. In that, the servant who knows himself to be intellectually the superior of his master looks forward half gleefully, half resentfully to a contest of wits between them; in this aria of the Count's the grandee's pride revolts at the thought that his servants should have dared to think so lightly of him as to try to play with him. He is now fully decided that Figaro shall marry old Marcellina.

The next scene shows the trial of Figaro's case before the Count, who, in virtue of his station, is the decider of causes upon his domain. Figaro has borrowed a thousand silver pieces from Marcellina; and the lawyer Curzio, who now enters with Marcellina, Figaro, and Bartolo, claims that he must either marry her or pay her. Figaro says he is of gentle birth, and therefore cannot marry without the consent of his parents. The Count, with humorous incredulity, asks who and where these noble parents are. Figaro

replies that he has been looking for them for the last ten years. He was stolen as a child; does he not bear on his arm a mysterious hieroglyphic? Marcellina pricks up her ears at this. Is the mysterious sign, by any chance, a spatula on the right arm? It proves to be so, and Marcellina discovers that Figaro is the long-lost child of herself and Bartolo — their little Rafaello, who was stolen from them.

The family reconciliation is very affecting, but it does not appeal to Suzanna, who, entering with a purse (she has somehow raised the money with which to buy off Figaro), sees her bridegroom in the arms of Marcellina. She boxes his ears, and it takes a little time to convince her of the real state of affairs. The charming sextet in which this situation is developed was Mozart's favourite among the *Figaro* numbers.

The actors having left the scene, Cherubino enters with Barbarina. He has slipped back from Seville, and Barbarina invites him to her father's cottage, where he will find all the prettiest girls of the estate. So that the Count shall not recognize him, she will dress him up in clothes of her own. When they have left, the Countess enters. She is a little disturbed at the course the intrigue has now taken; she fears the jealousy and wounded pride of the Count, whom she still loves, and whose love for her she hopes to win back again. Her emotions are expressed in the exquisite air " Dove sono."

In a short recitative Antonio tells the Count that he is certain Cherubino has returned; and later Suzanna and the Countess, also in recitative, work out the details of the coming meeting in the garden. Suzanna, to the Countess's dictation, writes the crucial letter to the Count, confirming, in the guise of a song to the Zephyr, the assignation in the garden. This is the charming little " Letter Duet," that has a curious old-world simplicity and fragrance. The letter is sealed with a pin, and on the back is written, " Send back the seal."

Barbarina and other peasant girls enter, bringing roses for their mistress; among the girls is Cherubino in female clothes. His good looks attract the attention of the Countess; she asks for the

flowers he is carrying, and he blushes as he hands them to her. Barbarina assures the Countess that the girl is her cousin, who has just arrived for the wedding. When the Count and Antonio enter, however, the latter pulls off Cherubino's headdress and substitutes for it his ensign's cap. Once more the Count is suspicious of his wife and angry with Cherubino; he threatens to punish him again, but Barbarina puts him to confusion by saying, " Your Excellency, you often used to say when you were embracing and kissing me, ' Barbarina, if you will only love me I will give you anything you ask for.' " She now asks to be allowed to marry Cherubino, but the Count is too confused to give the child a direct answer; all he can do is to mutter that the gods, the devil, and men seem to be conspiring to put him in the wrong.

When Figaro, who now enters, suggests that they should get on with the dancing, he is of course ignorant of the fact that the Count knows that it was Cherubino who jumped from the window and has now returned. Once more the Count tries to trap him with his questions, and once more Figaro escapes by his consummate assurance; if Cherubino says it was he who jumped on to the flower-bed, well, perhaps so, but if one man can jump out of a window, surely another can!

A bridal march is played, and the stage fills with people who have come to celebrate the wedding. A fandango is danced, and while Suzanna is kneeling before the Count to receive the bridal veil she quietly gives him the letter; when he secretly opens it he pricks his finger with the pin. Figaro, who is dancing, observes this, and remarks to Suzanna ironically that he presumes some lady has been sending a love-letter to the Count. The latter now breaks up the gathering, bidding them all depart to meet again at nightfall, when the nuptials shall be celebrated in proper style, with dancing, songs, feasting, and fireworks.

ACT IV

So far Figaro has been occupied in weaving a net round the Count; now he himself is to be caught in a net. The scene is the

garden at night, with arbours at right and left. Barbarina enters with a lantern; she has lost the pin which the Count has given her for Suzanna along with a message as to the meeting. Figaro enters with Marcellina, and the little girl innocently lets out the secret. It is now Figaro's turn to be jealous and suspicious; he is convinced that Suzanna has been deceiving him. Now it is his turn to swear vengeance, not only for himself but for the whole race of injured husbands. Marcellina, who sees the trouble he is in, good-naturedly goes off to warn Suzanna.

In the eighteenth-century opera every chief character had to have an aria, and it is for this reason alone that Marcellina and Basilio are at this point given arias to sing that are of no great musical value, and so inessential to the dramatic action that they are usually omitted. The movement of the drama is resumed in a recitative and aria of Figaro, in which he pours out his complaint against Suzanna and against women in general. In Beaumarchais, Figaro's long monologue has a very bitter taste; Mozart, as was his wont, softens the expression considerably.

Figaro conceals himself as the Countess and Suzanna enter disguised in each other's clothes. Figaro knows, and Suzanna knows that he knows, that the assignation with the Count is among the pines. She loudly asks the Countess's permission to retire there a little while. Then she sings her exquisite aria " Deh vieni non tardar," in which she pours out all the love of her heart for Figaro, who, however, naturally assumes that the Count is the object of this ardent longing.

Cherubino enters in search of Barbarina. Seeing the Countess, whom he takes to be Suzanna, he thinks a little preliminary flirtation will be agreeable, one woman being very much the same as another to him. In the middle of his courtship, which greatly embarrasses the Countess, the Count enters just in time to intercept a kiss that Cherubino is trying to give the supposed Suzanna; he aims a box on the ear at Cherubino, but it is received by Figaro, who has drawn near to get a better understanding of what is going on.

From this point on the intrigue works itself out along the lines

that might be expected. The Count makes love to the supposed Suzanna, giving her a ring as a pledge of his affection. The Countess goes into the pavilion on the right-hand side of the stage, where the Count means to join her. Figaro, prowling about, comes upon Suzanna, and, taking her to be the Countess, tells her how they can catch the Count with Suzanna in the pavilion. At first Suzanna disguises her voice, but when she forgets to do so for a moment Figaro realises who it is. He keeps his knowledge from her, meaning to pay her out for the trick she has practised upon him, while Suzanna's intention is to punish him for having doubted her. He pretends to make passionate love to the Countess, until Suzanna, unable to endure it any longer, bursts out in her natural voice and boxes his ears. He is delighted with this sign of her affection, and all is now well.

The pair act a comedy for the benefit of the Count, who has wandered back, having been unable to find the supposed Suzanna. Figaro falls at his bride's feet, and, after having staged a little love-scene, they make off towards the pavilion on the left side. The Count seizes Figaro, calls for his servants, and Basilio, Curzio, Antonio, and Bartolo come upon the scene. The Count goes to the pavilion on the left and brings out Cherubino and Barbarina (who have concealed themselves there for a little entertainment of their own), Marcellina and Suzanna; everybody of course takes the maid to be the Countess. She, still in the character of the Countess, implores the Count's forgiveness, but he is adamant. The situation is cleared up by the entry of the real Countess and the momentary humiliation of the Count; he pleads for pardon, which is granted him; and the opera ends with a joyous ensemble.

It may be added that in the delightful overture Mozart does not draw for his material on the themes of the opera itself, and makes no attempt, as later opera composers used to do, to tell the whole story in summarised form, but just writes a sprightly orchestral piece that is intended to tune the hearer in to the general mood of the coming comedy.

DON GIOVANNI

[Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart]

THE world indirectly owes *Don Giovanni* to a young lady who was probably no better than she ought to have been — one Josefa Duschek.

Originally a Josefa Hambacher, she had been born in Prague in 1753, and consequently was about three years older than Mozart. She became the pupil of Franz Duschek, a Prague musician some seventeen years older than herself, who fell in love with her and married her in 1773. She seems to have been a good pianist and a fair all-round musician, but it was more particularly as a singer that she distinguished herself; she must have had a considerable coloratura technique, if we may judge from an aria that Mozart wrote specially for her.

In her career as an opera singer she seems to have used her charms freely to advance her material interests. She had the good fortune to win the affection of a rich Bohemian nobleman, Count Christian Clam, and it was presumably out of the money he lavished on her that she bought in April 1784 a charming little estate near Prague, with a fine house on it known as the Villa Bertramka.

The property came, in 1838, into the possession of a family that took pains to preserve it in memory of Mozart; and to-day the house, which, owing to the growth of Prague, is no longer in the country but in a suburb, is virtually as it was when Josefa owned it and Mozart visited her there. In the garden there is still the little summer-house in which he used to work, and in which *Don Giovanni* was completed. A German writer justly maintains that

the Villa Bertramka has more title to be known as " the Mozart House " than either the place shown under that name at Salzburg, in which he was born, or that in Vienna, in which he lived.

Mozart first met Josefa in Salzburg in the summer of 1777, and the merry young people soon became very fond of each other. Later he met her again in Vienna. She was an enthusiastic admirer of his music, and did all she could to make it known in Prague; it was owing to her that the *Seraglio* was produced in that town soon after its first success in Vienna. In the capital, however, Mozart had never made much headway as an operatic composer.

The chief reason for this was probably the strong Italian proclivities of the reigning emperior, Joseph II, and of the Court generally. The theatre-going Viennese, too, were mostly a gay and somewhat superficial people, who preferred Italian music or the lighter productions of German composers to what they regarded as the almost too solid fare that Mozart gave them.

In 1786 there was an enterprising Italian impresario in Prague by the name of Pasquale Bondini, who ran a very capable opera company; he made a tremendous success with *Figaro,* which proved to be much more to the taste of the Prague public than it had been to that of Vienna. In December 1786, no doubt through the instrumentality of Josefa Duschek, Mozart was invited to Prague to see the production. He arrived there, with his wife Konstanze, on the 11th January, 1787, and found the town, as he wrote to his father and sister, *Figaro*-mad.

He went to see the opera on the 17th January, and was received with tumultuous applause when recognised by the audience. On the 20th he directed the performance himself. Mozart was as pleased with the Prague public as it was with him, and when he left for Vienna again in February it was with a commission from Bondini to write a new opera for his Prague troupe.

The librettist chosen for the new opera was Lorenzo da Ponte, a gifted but erratic Italian Jew who had settled in Vienna some years before and had made some success as a theatrical poet; the libretto of *Figaro* had been by him. The new text was in Mozart's

hands by the beginning of April, and by the summer he had written a good deal of the score. At the beginning of September he went to Prague, and the remainder of the opera was finished, under the happiest circumstances, at the Villa Bertramka.

The first performance should have taken place on the 14th October, in connection with the festivities in honour of Prince Anton of Saxony and his young wife the Archduchess Maria Theresa, a sister of the Austrian Emperor. The rehearsals for the new opera not being sufficiently advanced, however, *Figaro* was substituted for it on the 14th October, and it was not until the 29th that *Don Giovanni* was produced.

The Don was Luigi Bassi, a young baritone of twenty-two years of age, and it is merely from the accident that the first representative of the part was so young a man that the tradition began of making Don Giovanni rather younger in appearance than is quite consistent with the length of his amorous record at the time the opera commences.

The Zerlina was Katerina Bondini, the wife of the impresario. The story goes that in the scene in which Don Giovanni takes Zerlina into a private room and makes impetuous advances to her, nothing would induce Katerina Bondini to shriek as loudly as the situation seemed to demand, until one day at rehearsal Mozart accompanied her off the stage, and at the critical moment pinched her so hard that she let out a shriek with which no fault whatever could be found on the score of realism.

The older versions of the story that used to pass from mouth to mouth were quite explicit as to where the pinch was administered; but as a modern German writer piously remarks, " Honi soit qui mal y pense! " There was the usual trouble with the singers, Bassi in particular complaining that he " had no big aria to sing "; and it is said that the duet " La ci darem " was worked over five times before he condescended to approve of it.

Even in Prague, where Mozart was so beloved, *Don Giovanni,* enthusiastically as it was received, did not make the enduring success that *Figaro* did; like Vienna, the taste of the town was too predominantly Italian. In Vienna the work was first performed on

the 7th May, 1788, when, in order to satisfy the singers, Mozart had to make sundry alterations and write some new numbers.

As might have been expected, the work did not appeal to the Emperor and his Italianised subjects, and it disappeared from the bills after its fifteenth performance, on the 15th December. It was revived on the 5th November, 1791, after Mozart's death, this time in a German translation, and with a good deal of coarse exaggeration of the comic element. The opera spread gradually to other towns, but it was not until fairly well on into the nineteenth century that it can be said to have established itself firmly. It has to be remembered that *Don Giovanni* is both a difficult and an expensive opera to produce; it demands, for one thing, three women singers of the first quality.

The ultimate origin of the story of *Don Giovanni* is a moral play entitled *El Burlador de Sevilla, y Combidado de Pietra* (*The Mocker of Seville and the Stone Guest*), by a Spanish monk, Gabriel Tellez, who wrote under the pseudonym of Tirso de Molina. The play was printed in 1630. It is probable that the monkish author only blended for the first time in literary form certain old legends, on the one hand, of a young man of unbridled sensuality, and on the other, of a statue that interrupted a festivity.

Don Juan (to give him his Spanish name) is obviously, like Faust, the concentration of a universal type into a single personality. The theme, once reduced to writing, became immensely popular, and we find it being treated in one form or another by dramatists all over Europe. A drama on the subject, by one Giliberti, was acted in Naples in 1652, and another, about the same time, by Andrea Cigogni. Other Italian versions followed and various French dramatists took up the theme, including Molière, whose *Don Juan ou le Festin de Pierre* was acted in Paris in 1665. In England we have Thomas Shadwell's play *The Libertine* (1676). There are several other dramatic and operatic versions of the story, in Germany, Spain, and elsewhere; and Gluck made a ballet of it in Vienna in 1761. The Russian composer

Dargomijski left an unfinished opera on the subject (*The Stone Guest*).

The immediate predecessor of Mozart's work was an opera entitled *Il Convitato di Pietra* (*The Stone Guest*), the text by Bertati, the music by Gazzaniga, that was produced in Venice in 1787. This had a great popular success. That Da Ponte was familiar with it is shown by the numerous points of resemblance between his text and that of Bertati.

There is a romantic story told in all the Mozart biographies of how the overture was still unwritten on the day before the performance; how all that night Mozart's wife plied him with punch and kept him awake by telling him fairy-stories, while he wrote the overture; how the theatre copyist received the score at seven o'clock in the morning; and how the overture was played at sight in the evening.

Like so many other musical legends, however, this will not bear investigation. The evidence indicates that this incident took place not on the night before the performance but on the night before that — that is to say, on the night before the final rehearsal; Mozart's own dating of his score makes this a matter of certainty. Nor is the feat of writing the overture in a single night quite so remarkable as it sounds. Mozart had not only extraordinary facility in composition; he had a marvellous memory. "Composition," for him, meant developing a work in his head; he found the business of writing it out rather tiresome, and he would often postpone this as long as he could.

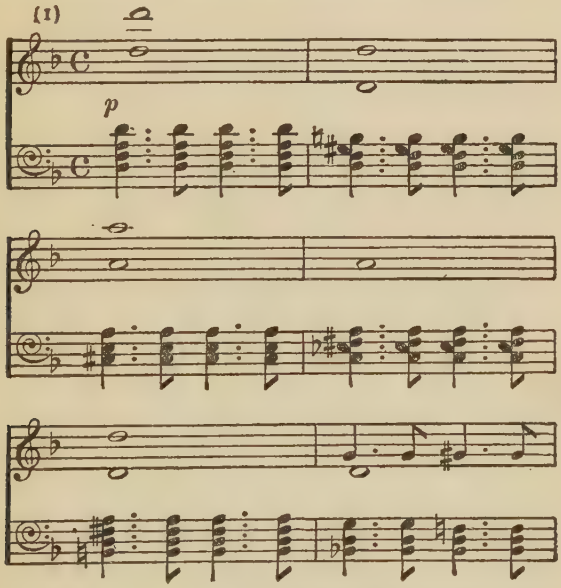
There can be little doubt that the overture to *Don Giovanni* had been worked out in his head long before the final rehearsal, and that all he had to do on that historic night was to put the notes on paper.

In the nineteenth century it became the fashion of writers upon music to read into the overture of *Don Giovanni* a number of programmatic intentions that were probably not in the mind of the composer. Mozart's usual practice was not to construct an overture out of themes taken from the opera, as was the way with the nineteenth-century opera composers, but to write an independent

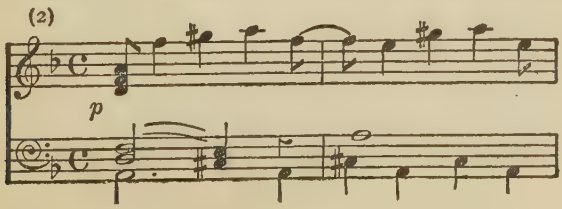
orchestral piece that should be broadly suggestive of what was to come.

In the case of *Don Giovanni,* however, the andante introduction undoubtedly has a programmatic significance, for it is based on the themes that, later on, accompany the supper to which the Commandant has invited his murderer.

Death may be said to brood over this slow introduction. It commences with a loud chord of the tonic of D minor, followed by a chord of the dominant; then come the solemn chords:

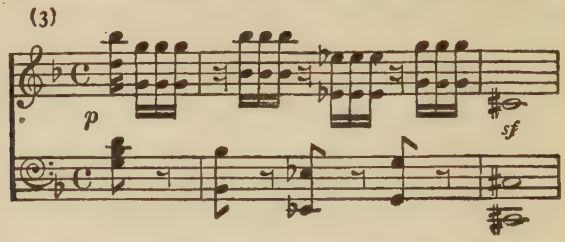


to which the Statue makes his terrifying entry in the supper scene. This is followed by the syncopated melody, so admirably expressive of uncertainty, to which Don Giovanni greets his visitor:



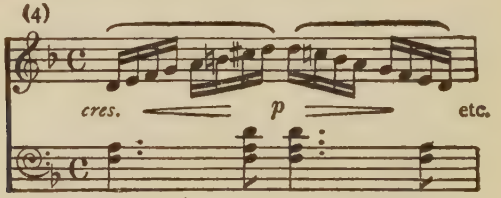
and this, after a brief transitional passage, by the harmonies that express the agitation of Leporello at the sight of the Statue:

(3)



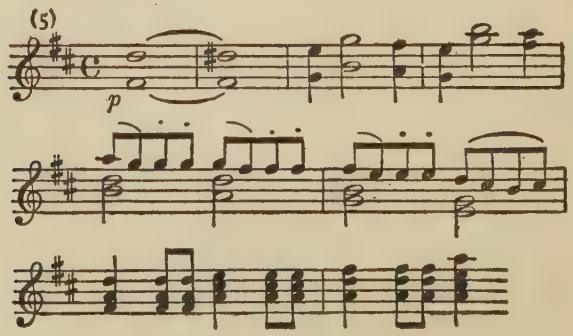
To this succeed the ghostly runs in the flutes and violins, with their sinister crescendi and diminuendi, that accompany the Statue's solemn warning to Don Giovanni:

(4)



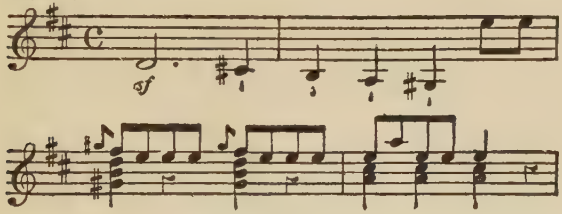
With a modulation into D major the molto allegro begins. This may be taken, as has been said above, to represent in general terms the swirl of life that accompanies Don Giovanni wherever he goes, though there are passages here and there that tempt us to believe that Mozart had some idea of a programme in his mind. The main theme is that with which the D major section begins:

(5)



A later passage, based on an alternation of an impressive octave figure and a chattering one in the violins:

(6)



may or may not be intended to point the moral of the contrast between morality and the sternness of Fate, as represented by the Commandant, and the irreligion and levity of Don Giovanni. A fair proportion of the overture is devoted to this antithesis, and the striding figure shown in the first part of No. 6 plays so large a part in the development that we may be pardoned for believing it to have had some special dramatic association in Mozart's mind.

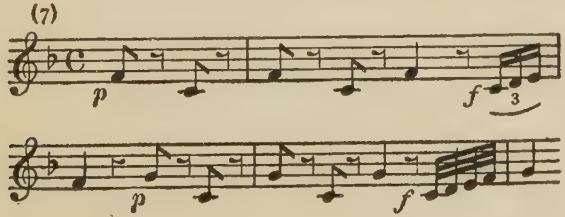
Though the overture is in D minor and D major, it ends, curiously enough, in C major, from which an easy transition is made into F major, in which key the opera begins.

ACT I

The setting of the story is in Seville. The first scene shows us the garden of the Commandant's house. A flight of steps leads up to the house; in the background is a small door leading into the street. It is getting on towards night.

Leporello, the servant of Don Giovanni, is seen striding up and down in front of the house, wrapped in a black cloak. To a melody that has become famous:

(7)



he tells us what he has to go through on account of his pleasure-seeking master; he has no rest day or night. He himself feels like playing the gentleman now and then, so he means to quit the service of Don Giovanni. It is all very well for his master, he says; *he* has a good time within doors, while Leporello has to hang about outside and play the sentinel. Hearing someone coming, he thinks it prudent to hide himself.

Out of the house comes Don Giovanni hurriedly, struggling with Donna Anna and trying to conceal his face from her. What has been going on inside we can only conjecture; but we realise that the lady is extremely agitated, and that she is as determined to discover the identity of the young man as he is to conceal it. She calls loudly on the servants for assistance against the betrayer; Don Giovanni bids her be quiet on pain of his anger, while the hidden Leporello joins in the trio half in amusement, half in fright.

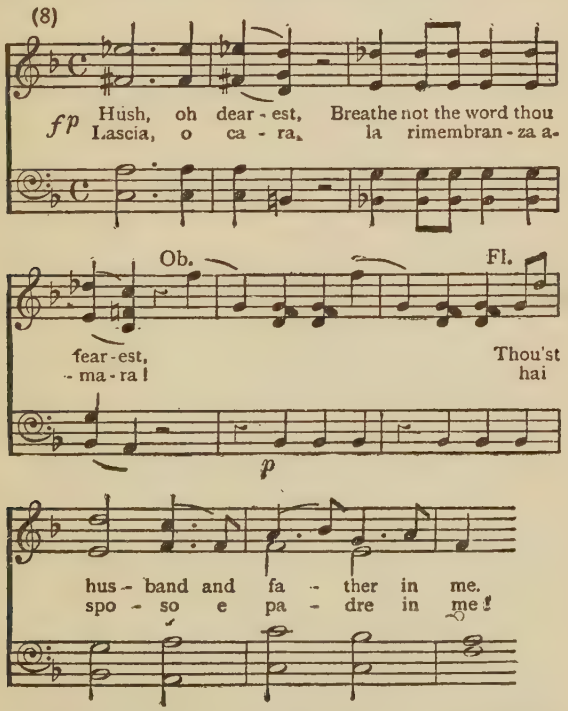
Through the door in the background the Commandant, Donna Anna's father, enters, sword in hand; at the sight of him Donna Anna rushes back into the house. The Commandant bids the seducer prepare to fight him, but Don Giovanni brushes the proposal aside with scorn. His unwillingness to attack the older man is indicated in a short ejaculation of " Misero! " Then, brushing pity aside, he repeats the " Misero! " in louder tones, and bids his adversary approach if he wishes to die.

They fight, and the Commandant falls mortally wounded, crying out for assistance; Don Giovanni, *sotto voce,* lets us see that at the bottom of his heart he is sorry for the crime that has been forced upon him, for murder is not one of his amusements. The action is once more carried on by way of a trio, Leporello inserting his terrified comments. The Commandant dies to the accompaniment of a wailing phrase in the violins and oboe, and Don Giovanni in subdued tones (in recitative) calls for his servant.

The frightened Leporello, disclosing himself and coming forward, naïvely, asks his master whether it is he or the old man who has been killed. Don Giovanni reassures him on this point, and Leporello congratulates him ironically on his double achievement — to have seduced the daughter and killed the father is

quite a good evening's work. "It was his own will," says Don Giovanni. "And Donna Anna," asks Leporello with sly malice, "was it her will too?" Don Giovanni cuts his familiarity short with a threat of a beating, and the two hasten away.

Donna Anna returns, accompanied by her betrothed, Don Ottavio, and servants carrying weapons and lights. To the accompaniment of an anguished phrase in the orchestra Donna Anna bends over the body of her father and, realizing that he is dead, gives full vent to her grief. Ottavio tries to console her, and the body having been removed by the servants, Donna Anna breaks out again into a passionate lament over her father. Ottavio again offers consolation, in a phrase that is like a caress:


(8)
fp
Hush, oh dear - est, Breathe not the word thou
Lascia, o ca - ra, la rimembran - za a-
Ob.
Fl.
fear - est,
- ma - ra!
Thou'st
hai
p
hus - band and fa - ther in me.
spo - so e pa - dre in me!

She makes him swear to avenge the murder, and after a duet on this theme they leave the stage.

The next scene shows us a street in the early morning. Don Giovanni and Leporello enter and carry on a conversation in recitative. Leporello, as usual, is disturbed about his master's little indiscretions. He asks if he may speak freely to him. Don Giovanni gives him permission, but Leporello first makes him promise that whatever he says he will not lose his temper with him. His master swears this on his honour, so long as the Commandant is not mentioned; Don Giovanni is already tired of that subject.

Taking precautions to see that nobody is within sight or hearing, and again anxiously reminding his master of his promise, Leporello says, "Well, my dear master, what I have to tell you is that the life you are living is that of a rascal." Don Giovanni's anger breaks out at this, and in spite of his promise he threatens Leporello with a thrashing if he does not behave himself better. He has, he tells his servant, some news for him. "Why do you think I am here?" he asks. Leporello does not know, but he has half an idea that it must be some new conquest; if that is so, will Don Giovanni kindly give him the lady's name, so that he may add it to the list?

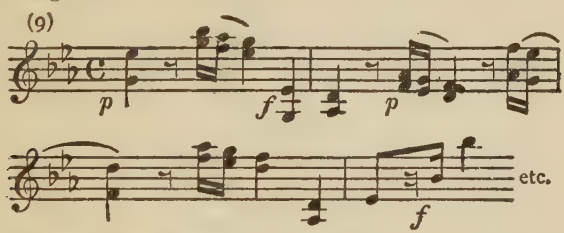
Don Giovanni gaily and ironically compliments him on his business-like methods, and informs him that he is in love with a beautiful lady, who, he is certain, also loves him. He has seen her and spoken to her, and is to meet her that evening. "But softly," he says, in a phrase that has become famous; "I seem to catch the odour of femininity" (*Mi pare sentir odor di femmina*). "Good Lord!" exclaims the admiring Leporello; "that's what I call a perfect sense of smell!" "She seems handsome," continues Don Giovanni. "What eyesight also!" adds Leporello. "Let us take cover and observe," says Don Giovanni; and the pair hide themselves as Elvira enters.

She is a lady with whom Don Giovanni has had a hectic affair elsewhere, and she has come in search of the fickle one who has first captured her heart and then deserted her. The mistake is sometimes made of playing this part too tragically. *The* tragic female character of the opera is Donna Anna, whose mind is entirely filled with the thought of vengeance on her own seducer and

the murderer of her father. Elvira, for all her passion and her capacity to feel resentment, represents a gentler, more affectionate, and more yielding type.

She breaks out into an aria in which she expresses her desire to find the lover who has left her; the orchestral accompaniment paints the agitation of her heart:

(9)

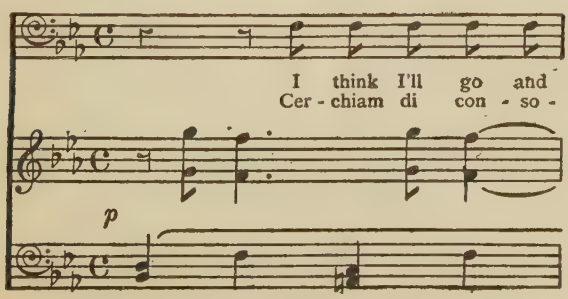


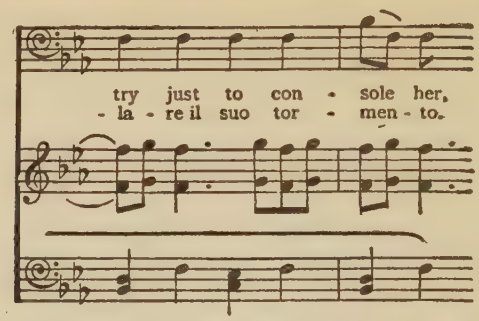
At the moment she is full of rage against the man who has jilted her; if she could find him, she assures us, she would tear out his heart.

Don Giovanni, who has had so many little affairs of this kind on his hands that he cannot reasonably be expected to remember them all, for a little while does not recognise Elvira; he tells Leporello she is probably some pretty girl who has been neglected by her lover, and as Elvira continues with her denunciation of the absent one he comments ironically, " Poor little girl! "

The opportunity for a new adventure seems to him too good to be thrown away, so he proposes to go to her and offer consolation; to which Leporello slyly adds, " No doubt, in the way you have consoled the other one thousand eight hundred." The orchestra comments slyly on their words:

(10)





This phrase, that is like a quiet smile with a chuckle accompanying it, runs through the remainder of the scene.

Donna Elvira having brought her aria to an end, Don Giovanni steps forward, to the accompaniment of the ironical No. 10, with a polite " Signorina! " Leporello remains completely in the background, listening to all that is said, and occasionally giving us his own humorous comments on it.

Elvira and Don Giovanni recognise each other simultaneously. The latter is for a moment taken aback; the lady, being the first to find her tongue, overwhelms him with reproaches. It appears that he has made a conquest of her in Burgos and left her after three romantic days. She reels off the story of her wrongs with such fluency that Leporello is moved to remark, *sotto voce,* " She's just like a printed book! " Don Giovanni assures Elvira that there were important reasons why he had to leave her so suddenly, and he appeals to Leporello to confirm him in this. He leaves his servant to explain to the lady, and slips away quietly. Leporello is for the moment so flabbergasted that he can only stammer out some nonsense about a square not being round. The lady turns indignantly to Don Giovanni to upbraid him for putting this further insult on her, but finds that he has fled.

She breaks out into fresh lamentations, and Leporello feels that the time has come to administer consolation. This he does by asking her not to take her betrayal and desertion too much to heart, as she was not the first and will not be the last of his master's amorous episodes. He shows her a little volume which, he

says, contains the names of the ladies he has loved, with the country, the town, and the village in each case; and he launches into his famous aria " Madamina! " In this he reels off in sprightly fashion the long list of Don Giovanni's lady-loves — in Italy, six hundred and forty; in Germany, two hundred and thirty-one; in France, a hundred; in Turkey, ninety-one; but in Spain here, he concludes, already a thousand and three, an almost astronomical figure which he repeats again and again, rolling it over his tongue with great gusto.

The list includes ladies of all social spheres — peasants, chambermaids, citizenesses, Countesses, Baronesses, Marchionesses, Princesses, in fact, every station, every age, and every shape. Then he describes the different kinds of technique adopted by his expert master; if the lady is a blonde, he praises her delicacy; if a brunette, her constancy, and so on. In winter he likes them plump, in summer rather on the slender side. The little débutante and the seasoned duenna both find a place on the list.

Having finished his aria, Leporello slips away, leaving Elvira to declaim indignantly against this lover of hers who first of all deserts her and then leaves her to his servant to be derided. Hell knowing no fury like a woman scorned, she swears she will track the wicked man down and have revenge.

The scene now changes to the country, where we see a village feast in progress. The local beauty, Zerlina, is about to be married to a sturdy swain of the village, Masetto. Led by Zerlina, the company join in a song in praise of the enjoyment of life. Don Giovanni, congratulating himself on his clever escape from Donna Elvira, comes upon the scene, accompanied by Leporello.

There are so many pretty girls there that Don Giovanni at once begins to take a kindly interest in the proceedings. He accosts the company condescendingly, and is told by Masetto and Zerlina, with all the respect due to his station, that they are respectively the bride and bridegroom of the day. Masetto is an honest bumpkin; Zerlina, who has ten times his brains, is a born coquette, and she and Don Giovanni very quickly come to a mutual understanding without anything definite being said on either side. Don

Giovanni bids Leporello invite the villagers to his palace, where they are to be provided with chocolate, coffee, and other refreshments. He is to do all he can to amuse them, show them the gardens, the gallery, the rooms, "in fact, do all you can to keep my friend Masetto contented; you understand me?" "I understand you," replies Leporello.

Zerlina, Don Giovanni has already intimated, will meanwhile remain under his own protection. Masetto jibs a little at this, but Leporello assures him that his master will be able to take quite as good care of Zerlina as he could do, and the minx assures her bridegroom that he need have no fear for her, for is she not in the hands of a cavalier? Masetto still grumbles a little, but Giovanni ends the dispute by touching his sword and giving Masetto a hint that if he does not mean to behave himself he will regret it. Masetto gives vent to his feelings in an aria in which he alternately reproaches Zerlina for having been his ruin, and declares himself to be ready, as a good vassal, to do what the master tells him.

Leporello having taken Masetto away, Don Giovanni proceeds to lay siege to Zerlina. He assures her that she is much too pretty to throw herself away on a peasant. Zerlina professes to be not quite sure of the honourableness of the intentions of the gentry as regards country maidens, but Giovanni assures her that the breed has been greatly calumniated. His intentions are so honourable, in fact, that he is willing to make her his wife there and then. He asks her to come with him into this little country house that belongs to him, and the pair break out into the enchanting duet "La ci darem la mano" ("There we will give each other our hands, there you will say 'Yes' to me"). Zerlina is still a little coy, or pretends to be so; she would and yet she would not, she assures him. But at length her scruples are overcome, and the two are about to enter the house when Donna Elvira enters, calls Don Giovanni a scoundrel once more, and declares that Heaven has sent her to be the means of rescuing this poor innocent girl from his clutches.

Giovanni manages the pair of them very artfully; to Elvira he

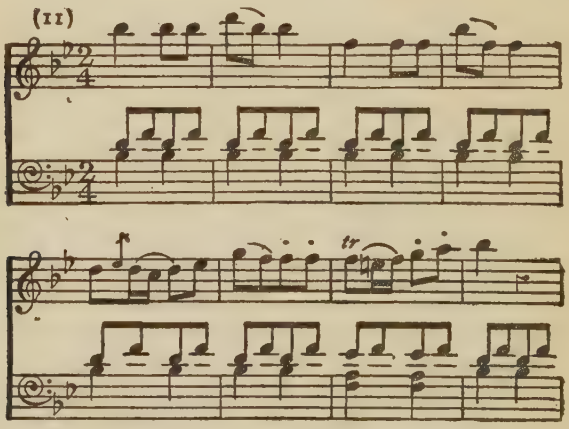
whispers that the affair with the village girl is just a little harmless diversion on his part, while he assures Zerlina that the great lady is crazy about him and, being the tender-hearted man he is, he has to humour her. Elvira warns Zerlina against him in an aria in the Handelian style that is often omitted in performance. At the end of it she goes away, taking Zerlina with her.

Don Giovanni is musing ruefully upon the scurvy way Fate has treated him when Donna Anna enters with Ottavio. The lovers are still discussing their plans of vengeance upon the murderer of the Commandant. Evidently what happened in the house in the first scene of the opera took place in the dark, for though Anna is acquainted with Don Giovanni, she does not as yet associate him with her misfortunes. She appeals to his friendship to assist her, and he gallantly protests that he is completely at her service. He is hypocritically asking the cause of her troubles when Elvira enters once more. Full of her own woes, as usual, she warns Anna against Giovanni, and the latter gets out of his difficulty for the moment by whispering to Anna and Ottavio that the poor girl is not quite in her right mind. Anna and Ottavio are not altogether convinced by him; and the expression of the varying thoughts of the four people is woven into a fine ensemble.

Elvira having left the stage, Don Giovanni follows her, professing to be anxious about her. When he has gone, Anna, almost collapsing, turns to Ottavio; she has recognised in this young man the murderer of her father; his voice and his manner have betrayed him. She tells her lover what happened on that fateful night; she was sitting alone in the darkness of her room when there entered a man in a mantle, whom for the moment she took for Ottavio; recognising, from the unaccustomed ardour of his embraces, that it was not her somewhat lymphatic lover, she struggled with the stranger, called on the servants, and followed the seducer into the street, where her father challenged him and was slain. Once more, in a long aria, she adjures Ottavio to take vengeance on the murderer. Then she goes out, leaving the stage free for Ottavio to sing his aria " Dalla sua pace," one of the interpolated numbers that is frequently omitted in performance.

He also having left the stage, Leporello enters, followed immediately by Don Giovanni. Leporello is once more resolved to leave this troublesome master of his. He tells the latter what has happened — how, as he had been told to do, he took the peasants away, gave them plenty of wine, and set them amusing themselves, but had a good deal of trouble with Masetto. Just when everything seemed to be going well, it seems, Zerlina had come in with Elvira, the latter, as usual, full of denunciations of Giovanni. Leporello had got out of the difficulty by escorting Elvira outside the house and then locking the door.

He is complimented on his presence of mind by Don Giovanni, who now thinks it time to return to the villagers. In what is known in Germany as the " Champagne Aria " he tells Leporello to invite all the villagers to his palace and set them enjoying themselves; while they are doing this he himself, with the co-operation of the prettiest of the girls, will have added by the morning, he hopes, another ten to the list. The aria, which commences thus:

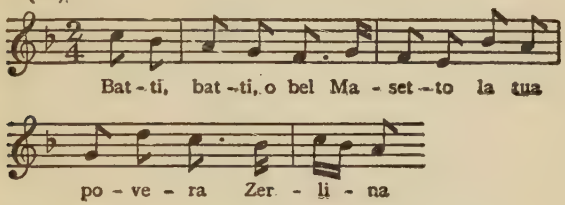


is irresistible in its vivacity, its expression of the joy of life. It is marked presto, and the singer should take it as fast as he possibly can, and then a little faster.

The next scene is in the garden. While the other villagers are enjoying themselves, Masetto reproaches Zerlina for her incon-

stancy on the eve of their wedding. She protests her essential innocence; it was simply, she says, that for the moment she had succumbed to the flattery of this very engaging young man. She sets herself to the re-conquest of her rustic swain in the delicious aria " Batti, batti ":

(12)



in which she protests her love for Masetto, and invites him to beat her if he feels angry with her; she will take her thrashing like a lamb! Her wiles and her charm are altogether too much for simple, honest Masetto, who forgives her.

Just then Don Giovanni's voice is heard within. It revives Masetto's suspicions. He will watch his lordship, he tells Zerlina; and for this purpose he hides in an alcove as Giovanni enters with some servants, whom he orders to do everything possible for the entertainment of his guests. All gradually leave the stage except Zerlina, to whom Giovanni once more makes love. The coquettish Zerlina allows him to lead her towards the alcove, where Giovanni, to his astonishment, sees Masetto. For the moment he is a trifle confused, then, recovering himself, he tells Masetto that the fair Zerlina was unhappy at being parted from her swain. Masetto thanks him ironically, and the three go off to join the others.

Ottavio, Anna, and Elvira now enter, masked; they are still in search of Giovanni. In the distance a minuet is heard; Leporello having drawn his master's attention to the masks below, Giovanni, at the window, tells him to invite them in to the dance. Again they recognise his voice. They accept the invitation, but before entering indulge in a trio in which they solemnly appeal for the protection of Heaven in their undertaking.

Once more the scene changes, this time to a ballroom, in which Don Giovanni and Leporello are making themselves agreeable to the peasants. Trouble, we feel, is brewing; Masetto is still watching both Don Giovanni and Zerlina suspiciously. The three masks enter and are courteously welcomed by Don Giovanni. Elvira recognises Zerlina and points her out to Anna and Ottavio as the brand she had plucked from the burning. Leporello forces Masetto to dance with him while Don Giovanni attends to Zerlina, whom finally he leads into an inner room.

Soon a wild cry for help is heard from her. Anna, Elvira, Ottavio, and Masetto break open the door, and are met by the ever-resourceful Giovanni, who comes out holding Leporello by the arm; he pretends to be angry with him, and makes as if to stab him with his sword. It is Leporello, Giovanni would have the company believe, who has been misbehaving himself with Zerlina. Anna, Elvira, and Ottavio unmask, and join with Zerlina and Masetto in a denunciation of Don Giovanni, who, they say, they now recognise for the villain he is. Don Giovanni's courage does not desert him; defying their wrath, he makes his escape sword in hand.

ACT II

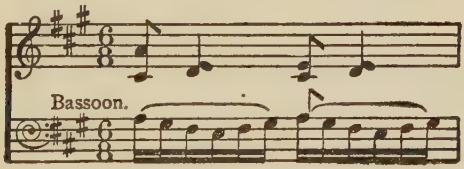
The second acts opens with a scene in a street. Giovanni and Leporello are seen in lively conversation. Leporello has once more resolved to leave this master whose service is so full of embarrassments for him; but Giovanni overcomes his scruples with money. Leporello promises to stay with him on one condition — that Giovanni gives up the women. Giovanni can hardly believe his ears; "Give up the women? Never! They are more necessary to me than the bread I eat or the air I breathe!"

His infidelities, he assures Leporello, are really a superior fidelity to the sex; how can an affectionate heart like his be true to one without being untrue to all the others? He has a new adventure on hand. He has been smitten with the pretty serving-maid of Elvira, and intends that evening to try his fortune with her; but

as the difference between their stations might cause a little trouble, he means to dress himself in Leporello's cloak. Leporello protests, but in vain. (In some modern productions of the opera it is made to appear that Zerlina has entered Elvira's service, and that it is she whom Giovanni is still pursuing. For this there is not the slightest warrant in the libretto.)

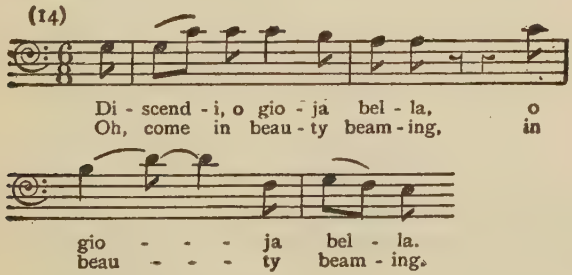
Evening comes on, and Elvira appears at her window, where she sings a sad little song; her heart has been broken by the traitor. Don Giovanni's present problem is how to get rid of her in order to make the way clear for him with the maid. To this end he hides behind Leporello (who, of course, now wears the appearance of his master), and protests his undying love for Elvira; and once more she is weak enough to believe him. The trio that constitutes this scene is full of the finest musical touches. Don Giovanni's artfulness and Leporello's amusement are suggested in a little figure that keeps winding in and out in the orchestra:

(13)



Don Giovanni's love-making, that is ostensibly addressed to Elvira, is really intended for the maid; one of his phrases:

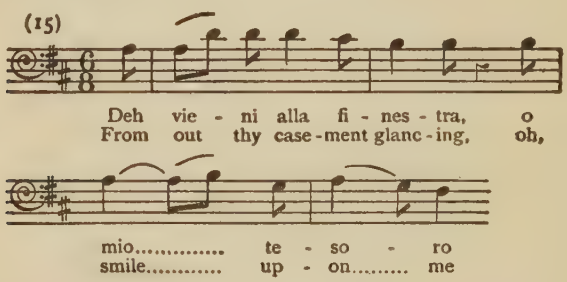
(14)



seems to be an anticipation of the serenade he sings to the maid later.

This comedy having achieved its end, and Elvira having disappeared from the window, Don Giovanni hurriedly gives the protesting Leporello his instructions. When Elvira appears he is to make love to her in the guise of his master, and as soon as possible to get her out of the way. Don Giovanni stands aside and watches the burlesque that ensues; Elvira, when she appears in the street, pours out all her affection on the supposed Giovanni, and Leporello plays his new part of the gallant with great satisfaction to himself. Giovanni suddenly makes his appearance and pretends to attack them, and they make their escape, leaving him free to serenade the maid, which he does in the celebrated " Deh, vieni alla finestra," with its charming accompaniment of plucked strings and mandoline:

(15)



The resemblance between this and No. 14 is obvious. Mozart makes Giovanni address each of his victims in a style appropriate to her. The serenade of the serving-maid is in the popular vein she might be supposed to be familiar with and to appreciate; and as the melody of No. 14 is in the same vein, it is a fair assumption that Giovanni intends this to go over Elvira's head to the ears of her servant.

Just as Don Giovanni catches sight of the maid at the window, Masetto and several villagers enter armed with guns, pistols, and other weapons. Don Giovanni's genius at once rises to the occasion. Pretending to be Leporello, he accosts Masetto and runs down his master, of whose wickedness he professes himself to be weary; he is even willing to help them to find and punish him.

He describes Giovanni's dress, and sends the villagers out in various directions to look for him, keeping Masetto with himself.

When the two are left alone he pumps Masetto, and learns that the latter intends to kill the young nobleman if he finds him. By a ruse Giovanni gets the simple fellow's weapons from him, then beats him with the flat of his sword, and makes his escape. Masetto's cries bring Zerlina to him. She consoles him for his injuries in the aria "Vedrai carino," in which she tells him of the one sovereign remedy — love — for all hurts, whether of the body or the soul.

After she has taken the bruised swain away, still feeling very sorry for himself, Leporello, re-enters with Elvira. The scene is now a courtyard in front of the house of Donna Anna. While Elvira is indulging herself in the luxury of another little aria, Leporello is seeking a door by which he may escape. Meanwhile Ottavio and Anna enter in mourning, to the accompaniment of a solemn strain in the orchestra. Ottavio is at his eternal business of consolation.

As Leporello is trying to escape he is caught by Masetto and Zerlina, who enter at that moment. Elvira claims him as her husband, and Ottavio and the others recognise her. In spite of her appeals for him the others seize upon the supposed Giovanni and are about to deal with him as he deserves; but Leporello's whinings for mercy soon set them right as to his identity. All are for punishing him, partly for his own misdeeds, partly for those of his master; but by artfully rambling on and professing to be as much the victim of his master's wickedness as any of them, he manages to stay their avenging hands till an opportunity comes for him to slip away from them.

It has now become clear to all that the murderer of the Commandant was Don Giovanni. Commending Anna to the care of the others, Ottavio declares his intention of going to the authorities to invoke the law against Don Giovanni — a quite incredible proceeding on the part of a Spanish gentleman of the period, who would, of course, be expected to avenge a wrong of this kind by his own sword. Ottavio, however, is peculiarly ineffective all

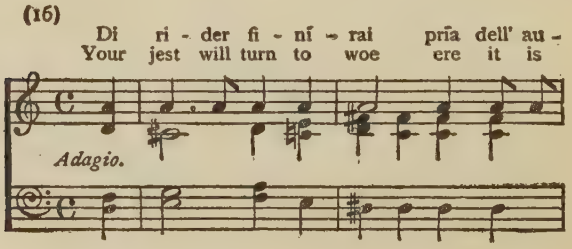
through the opera. Before leaving the stage he sings one of the star tenor arias, "Il mio tesoro intanto" — one of the loveliest of Mozart's creations.

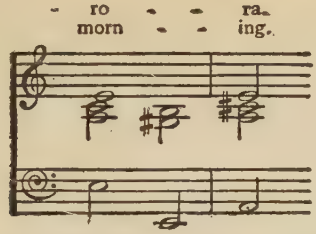
In the score there follows at this point a scene of low comedy (an interpolation for the Vienna production) between Zerlina and Leporello, in which she first of all threatens him with a razor, then drags him about by the hair, and then, with the assistance of the peasants, ties him up in a chair. After volubly upbraiding him for his crimes, she and the peasants leave him, and he manages to make his escape. This scene is generally omitted in performance, while the magnificent aria of Donna Elvira that follows, "Mi tradì quell' alma ingrata" — also written for Vienna — is as a rule transferred to an earlier scene.

The next scene shows us a churchyard, with a newly erected equestrian statue of the Commandant. Don Giovanni enters, leaping over the wall. During the course of his nocturnal adventures he has met another pretty girl, who happens to have been a flame of Leporello's. After a little love-making on his part she had recognised Don Giovanni, taken fright, cried out, and brought a crowd about him, from which he escaped only by running away and leaping the churchyard wall. All this he tells to Leporello in a long recitative.

Giovanni's laughter over the amusing incident is abruptly broken in upon by a solemn warning from the Statue that before the dawn his laughter will be over. This short utterance of the Statue is accompanied only by oboes, clarinets, bassoons, bass strings, and three trombones, the latter instruments entering, with an effect of tremendous solemnity, for the first time in the opera:

(16)





" Who spoke? " asks the startled Don Giovanni. Leporello replies, " Oh, some spirit from the other world, who knows you through and through." Bidding him be silent, Giovanni puts his hand to his sword and cries, " Who goes there? " The bass voice of the Statue strikes in again with a warning to him to leave the dead in peace.

Believing, or affecting to believe, that it is only someone on the other side of the wall who is sporting with them, Giovanni draws his companion's attention to the Statue of the Commandant. He would like to know what that inscription on it says. Leporello pretends not to be able to make it out by moonlight, but under the imperious command of his master he at last reads out: " Here I await vengeance upon the impious one who slew me." Leporello is scared out of his wits at this; but the reckless Giovanni orders him to tell the old man that his master invites him to sup with him that evening. After a terrified protest Leporello does so, and the Statue slowly inclines its head in assent. This is not enough for Don Giovanni, who arrogantly orders the Statue to answer. Will it or will it not come to supper with him? The Statue utters the one word " Yes," and Don Giovanni drags Leporello away with him to make the necessary preparations for the supper.

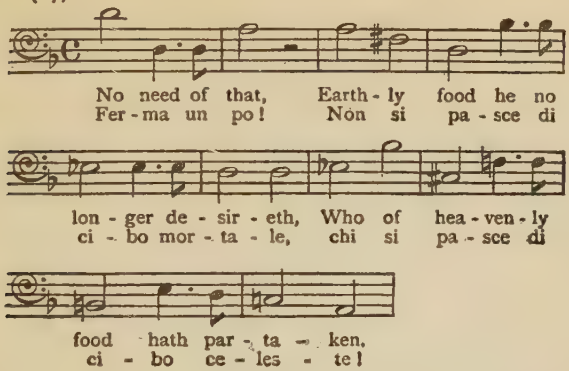
The scene changes to a room in a house in which Ottavio is once more seen consoling Anna and assuring her that the murderer of her father will soon be brought to justice. His suggestion of marriage is turned aside by Anna, who cannot permit herself any happiness till her father has been avenged. Ottavio having taken this to mean that she no longer loves him, Anna, in the superb aria " Non mi dir," seizes the opportunity to assure him that her affection is unchanged.

The final scene shows us a brilliantly lit room in Don Giovanni's house, where he is entertaining a numerous and gay company to supper. In the gallery is a band of musicians who play snatches from some of the most popular operas of the time, including Martini's *La Cosa Rara,* and the melody of Figaro's aria " Non più andrai." Giovanni, as usual, is full of the hectic joy of life, while Leporello, whose appetites are more material, is indulging liberally in food and drink in the intervals of attending upon his master.

A last chance is offered Giovanni to save himself; Elvira rushes in, flings herself at his feet, and implores him, in the name of her love, to mend his ways and make his peace with God. His only reply is to deride her. Finding it impossible to penetrate his armour of egoism and sensuality, Elvira rushes away, but returns instantly, gives a great shriek, and makes another exit on the opposite side. Don Giovanni sends Leporello to discover the cause of her perturbation. Leporello has no sooner left the stage than he also gives a great cry; then he returns, shuts the door, and in accents of terror tells his master that outside is the Statue. While he is giving a graphic description of the apparition, a loud knocking is heard at the door. Giovanni orders Leporello to open, but this time the servant positively refuses.

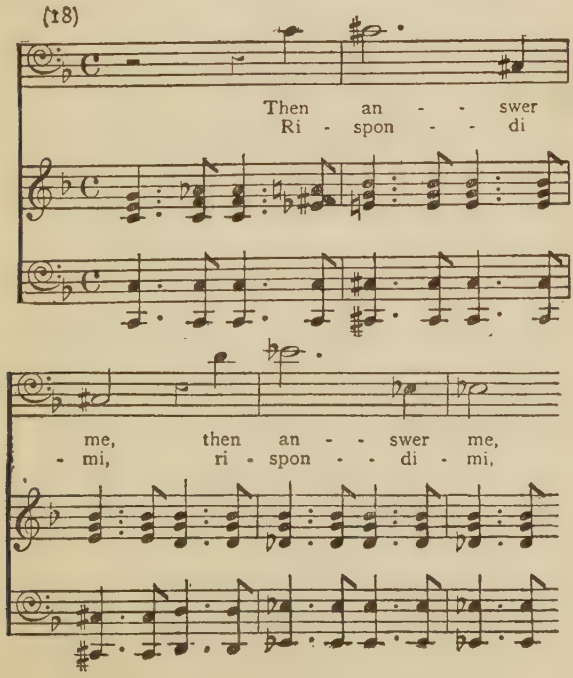
Giovanni strides to the door himself, flings it open, and the Statue enters, to the solemn chords heard at the commencement of the overture. As already mentioned, the music to this part of the scene is virtually identical with that of the slow preamble to the overture. The Statue has come, it says, in fulfilment of its promise. Don Giovanni, whom, from the agitated orchestral accompaniment to his words (see No. 2), we may assume to be secretly perturbed, defiantly welcomes his guest and bids Leporello lay another cover for him. Leporello, who has hidden under the table, can only stammer out in his fright, " Ah, master, master! We are all lost! " The Statue waves aside the proffered hospitality with the intimation that those who have tasted of the celestial food have no need of mortal aliment:

(17)


No need of that, Earth - ly food he no
Fer - ma un po! Non si pa - sce di
lon - ger de - sir - eth, Who of hea - ven - ly
ci - bo mor - ta - le, chi si pa - sce di
food hath par - ta - ken,
ci - bo ce - les - te!

In spite of the bravado of Don Giovanni and the comic terrors of Leporello under the table, the horror of the scene steadily accumulates. The Commandant ends by returning Giovanni's invitation to supper:

(18)



and the vainglorious young man, who scorns to show any sign of fear, accepts. " Give me your hand in pledge," says the Statue. Giovanni places his hand in that of the Commandant, and at once a deadly chill strikes through him.

Holding him in a marble grip from which there is no escape, the Statue exhorts him to repent, but Giovanni heroically refuses. Releasing him at last, the Statue stalks out. Flames appear, the earth trembles, and an invisible chorus from below sings of the torments that are awaiting Giovanni, who is at last swallowed up in the flames.

Just then Elvira, Anna, Zerlina, Ottavio, and Masetto enter, accompanied by the ministers of justice. " Where is the miscreant? " they ask. Leporello, his teeth still chattering, tells them of the awful fate that has overtaken his master, and the opera ends in an ensemble that is a curious mixture of moods.

Ottavio begs Anna, now that her wrongs have been righted, to fulfil her vows to him, but she asks him to grant her a year's delay. Elvira announces her intention of going into a convent to end her days. Masetto and Zerlina, who are made of more ordinary clay, look forward happily to their speedy marriage. Leporello tells them all that he will look out for another and a better master. Finally all join in an ensemble in which they point the moral of the story.

THE MAGIC FLUTE

IT was apparently in 1779, when Mozart was twenty-three years old, that he met in Salzburg the touring theatrical impresario Emanuel Schikaneder, who was at that time performing in Mozart's native town.

This Schikaneder, who was born in 1748 and died mad in 1812, was a remarkable character in his way; he may, indeed, be regarded as an anticipation of certain theatrical managers and speculators who are very much in the public eye at the present time. He was a bit of everything, singer, actor, producer, poet, theatre proprietor, and what not; and in most of these capacities he seems to have done quite well.

Perhaps he was born before his due time; had he lived in the America or the Germany or the England of the present day he would probably have been a combination of P. T. Barnum, C. B. Cochran, and Max Reinhardt, running anything from a rodeo to a musical comedy or a miracle play, and making a commercial success of them all. He was one of the first public entertainers to know what the public really wants; and having discovered what his public wanted he was always ready to supply it. Finding that his compatriots had a great liking for spectacular shows, with animals and plenty of clowning in them, he gave them these on a large scale; at Graz, for example, he produced before some three thousand spectators a spectacular soldier play in the realistic surroundings of a military camp, the cavalry officers playing appropriate parts.

During his stay in Salzburg Schikaneder produced a play by

one Gebler, *Thamos, King of Egypt,* for which Mozart had written some instrumental music six years or so before; this he now revised and added to for the purpose of Schikaneder's production.

After that, Schikaneder, so far as we are concerned, disappears from the scene for about ten years. In the spring of 1789, after many wanderings, he settled in Vienna. There he found that his wife, with whom he had not been living for some years, was running the Theater auf der Wieden — which was a wooden erection in a courtyard in a big block of buildings outside the fortifications. Frau Schikaneder was doing none too well, mainly by reason of the competition of the theatre of a certain Marinelli, a busy producer of fairy-plays, comic operas, and so on, who had the light-hearted and light-headed Viennese public at his feet.

Schikaneder saw the possibilities of the situation, had himself made director of the Theater auf der Wieden, and then laid himself out to beat Marinelli at his own game. A favourite Viennese comic stage type, Kasperl, had been a roaring success in several of Marinelli's productions. Schikaneder invented, or found, an Anton as a counterpoise to Kasperl; and this Anton appeared with great success in no less than seven of Schikaneder's farces. In addition to these he produced a number of good serious plays and high-class operas, and in a very little while was a leading figure in the amusement life of Vienna.

Mozart, who was living in Vienna at the time, would in any case have had no difficulty in renewing his Salzburg acquaintance with Schikaneder, but matters were no doubt made easier for him by the fact that his sister-in-law Josefa Hofer, a brilliant coloratura singer, was a member of Schikaneder's theatrical company. In 1790 Schikaneder planned a magic opera, *Der Stein der Weisen,* the music for which was made up from various sources. Mozart is supposed to have contributed an aria, but his authorship of the piece printed under his name in the complete edition of his works is denied in some quarters.

Schikaneder's proposal to Mozart that he should write a German opera was received enthusiastically by the composer, for two reasons. In the first place, his financial affairs at this time were

in so desperate a condition that he jumped at the prospect of making a little money by an opera. In the second place, it had long been his desire to write an opera to German words. His last work in this line had been the *Seraglio,* which was produced in 1782. But the tastes of the Emperor, the Court, and a great part of the public were immovably Italian, and the wave of national enthusiasm that cast up the *Seraglio* soon exhausted itself. Mozart's later operas, *Figaro, Don Giovanni,* and *Così fan tutte,* had all been written to Italian words.

Schikaneder probably did not very much care what the subject of the new opera was so long as it fulfilled two conditions; it must be in the prevailing taste of the moment, which was all for magic, spectacle, and the Oriental, and it must contain a good part for himself, for he was a comic actor of decided ability. He was a big person, and fond of the pleasures of the table; and after success came to him he lived freely.

There was a tradition in Vienna in the earlier part of the nineteenth century that during the last year or so of his life Mozart drank heavily. There is no direct evidence on the point, but it is by no means improbable that, miserable and ill and worried as he was, he found a good deal of pleasure in Schikaneder's gay parties, for Mozart always appreciated the simpler joys of life.

Schikaneder seems to have known his man. He had probably heard that along with Mozart's incredible facility for composing in his head there went a strange reluctance to put his music on paper until he was compelled to do so; he therefore took the wise precaution of lodging Mozart in a little summer-house in the courtyard in which the theatre stood, where, no doubt, he could see to it that some progress was made each day. This summer-house was fortunately preserved through the nineteenth century, and in 1877 it was removed to Salzburg, where it now stands.

Mozart would be all the more glad to have this residence for economic reasons. His wife Konstanze was away, as she so often was, in Baden, for however short of money her husband might be, and whatever difficulty he had in earning it, Konstanze seems to have seen no reason why she should give up her " cure " and

the dancing and other amusements that accompanied it. Mozart, left alone — for Konstanze had with her the little Karl, then aged seven — and without a servant, would be glad to be comfortably housed in the immediate neighbourhood of Schikaneder and other laughter-loving theatrical friends.

The bulk of the music to *The Magic Flute* was written between May and July 1791. Konstanze returned to Vienna on the 11th July, and on the 26th a son, Franz Xaver Wolfgang, was born. In the late summer and early autumn Mozart orchestrated what he had written and completed the little that had been left over, the overture, as so often happened with him, being all ready in his head for some time, but not written down till the 28th September, two days before the performance.

The origins of the book of *The Magic Flute* are wrapped in mystery. For some reason or other the plan of the opera seems to have been altered shortly after practical work had been begun upon it — for apparently Mozart had not a complete libretto before him to begin with, but composed the music to this or that scene as it was handed him.

It is conjectured, probably with reason, that Schikaneder's original intention was simply to provide the Viennese public with another specimen of the sort of entertainment for which it had already shown so marked a liking — an Oriental tale of magic and mystery, with vice vanquished and virtue triumphant at the end, plenty of brilliant spectacle, live animals, and so on, and, above all, a prominent comic part for Schikaneder himself.

Schikaneder already had in rehearsal (it was produced on the 23rd July) an opera named *Oberon,* the music by Wranitzky, the plot being taken from a collection of pseudo-Oriental tales by Wieland and others. From one of these tales, *Lulu,* Schikaneder got the idea of *The Magic Flute.* The first conception seems to have been to work out the story along the conventional lines — a wicked magician has captured the daughter of the fairy queen, who sends a portrait of her daughter to the hero, who, by the help of a magic flute, rescues the maiden from captivity. Although *Oberon* was not publicly produced until the composition of *The*

Magic Flute was well advanced, Mozart must have made the acquaintance of it either at rehearsal or at Schikaneder's house, for the resemblances between Wranitzky's score and Mozart's are too many and too close to be explained by mere coincidence.

Why the plot was changed will probably never be known for certain. It has been said that it was because Marinelli, in June, brought out a comic opera at his own theatre founded on the same story, entitled *Kaspar der Fagottist, oder die Zauberzither* (*Kaspar the Bassoonist, or the Magic Zither*), the music of which was by Wendel Müller. Against this theory it has been urged that it was quite a common practice of that time for dramatists and librettists to treat the same subject. It is possible, however, that Schikaneder, like the smart impresario he was, suddenly saw that the immediate road to a big success lay in the direction of doing not what the public was already used to but something just a little different.

Accordingly the basis of the new opera was changed; it now dealt with the mysteries of Freemasonry, which were very much in the air at that time. The wicked magician was changed into a good one, and the fairy queen from a good fairy queen into a bad one, whose daughter had been taken from her by the magician for the girl's own benefit.

Without being a Freemason oneself, but with an elementary knowledge of the principles and the history of the order, it is easy to see, from a mere reading of the libretto, that a masonic intention and significance runs through the whole of the opera after the first scene or two.

During the eighteenth century Freemasonry had a political as well as a benevolent side. It attracted a great many men of high character whose ideal was the regeneration of humanity by moral means; but, rightly or wrongly, it was held by the Catholic Church and the political authorities to be dangerous both to religion and to the well-being of the State. At the same time it drew within its ranks, curiously enough, a fair number of highly placed politicians and ecclesiastics; and although some of these may have joined the lodges merely in the capacity of spies, the

majority of them were no doubt sincere philanthropists and idealists.

The Emperor Franz I was a a member of a Viennese lodge, and in 1743 Vienna was treated to the piquant situation of the lodge's being raided by order of the Empress Maria Theresa, and her august husband's having to escape by the back stairs. Joseph II (1780–90) looked with a lenient eye on Freemasonry, and so, seemingly, did his successor Leopold II, though in the latter's reign the clergy did their best to get the lodges suppressed. Under Francis II, who came to the throne in 1792, an active campaign against Freemasonry was begun.

It has generally been held that the Queen of Night in *The Magic Flute* is the Masonic view of the Empress Maria Theresa, that the good Sarastro is Ignaz von Born, an eminent Austrian scientist and Freemason of Mozart's circle, the hero Tamino is the Emperor Joseph II, Pamina is the Austrian people, while the wicked Moor Monostatos represents the clerics in general and the Jesuits in particular.

The mystery in connection with the treatment of the subject of *The Magic Flute* extends also to its authorship. For more than half a century the libretto was supposed to be the work of Schikaneder, whose name appeared on the title-page. But in 1849 one Julius Cornet, who had begun his career as a tenor singer but afterwards became an opera director in Hamburg and Vienna, published a book in which he told how, in Vienna in 1818 (it was really in 1819), he met a venerable gentleman named Giesecke, who informed him and the other diners at the restaurant table that *he* was the real author of the libretto of *The Magic Flute,* Schikaneder having contributed only the figures of Papageno and Papagena.

This Giesecke, whose real name was Johann Georg Metzler, had a very extraordinary career. Born in 1761, he first studied law and then went on the stage. He became the friend of Goethe, Schiller, and other leading literary Germans of the day, translated *Hamlet,* studied mineralogy, dabbled in musical composition, and is said to have been the original of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister.*

During the period of the putting together of *The Magic Flute* he was a member of Schikaneder's theatrical company in Vienna. Towards the end of the century he forsook the stage for science, particularly mineralogy. After he had lived for some time in Denmark and Sweden, King Christian VII sent him on a scientific mission to Greenland, where he remained over seven years. He returned to civilisation in 1813 by way of Hull, and in December of that year settled down in Dublin as occupant of the newly founded Chair of Mineralogy. He died in Dublin in 1833.

The only other evidence in favour of Giesecke's authorship of the libretto of *The Magic Flute* is that of the pianist and composer Sigismund Neukomm (1778–1858). Neukomm, who had known Giesecke in Vienna in 1798, assured Otto Jahn, the great biographer of Mozart, of Giesecke's authorship of the libretto, the information being presumably derived from Giesecke himself.

This is all we really know on the subject, and it is not much. It has been held that the more serious portions of the libretto could not have been written by Schikaneder, and must therefore have been written by Giesecke. The argument is hardly conclusive, especially when it is remembered that the greater part of the text of the opera is miserable hack work that would be within the powers of anyone who could handle a pen.

All that has been written on the subject, apart from the two statements of Cornet and Neukomm, is pure conjecture. There is not the slightest direct evidence as to what part Giesecke had in the libretto, or even that he had any considerable part at all; and it certainly seems odd that, if he were the true author of the book, he should have allowed it to come out with Schikaneder's name upon it. To this it has been replied that as Freemasonry was in ill odour with the Court and the Church just then, Giesecke may have thought it imprudent to avow publicly his connection with this Masonic opera; but that argument, one thinks, would apply equally to Schikaneder.

No doubt Giesecke, who, as we have seen, was a member of Schikaneder's troupe (he played the part of the First Slave in the

opera), had something to do with the putting together of the book, along with Schikaneder and Mozart and, quite possibly, others; but the precise contribution of each of them it is now quite impossible to determine.

The ultimate source of the many plays, novels, and operas of the time that dealt with more or less imaginary Egyptian mysteries seems to have been the book of a certain French Abbé Terrasson (1670–1750) entitled *Sethos,* which the author pretended to be " translated from a Greek manuscript." The book may still be occasionally picked up in the sixpenny box on the bookstalls, and is worth reading by anyone who is interested in *The Magic Flute,* for whoever wrote the book of the latter certainly knew *Sethos,* two passages in the opera being taken almost word for word from the novel.

Terrasson's book was in great vogue among the Freemasons of the day, being regarded, indeed, as an authoritative exposition of the ancient mysteries; and it is not improbable that one element in the success of the opera may have been the Freemasons' approval of the general Masonic intention of the work.

While still engaged upon *The Magic Flute,* Mozart accepted that commission for a Requiem Mass that constitutes one of the strangest chapters in his life. A certain Count Walsegg, who had a mania for commissioning works from well-known composers and having them performed as his own, conceived in 1791 the idea of laying Mozart's genius under contribution. Keeping in the background himself, he ordered the Requiem anonymously through a servant of his, by all accounts a somewhat sinister-looking person. The peculiar appearance of this man and the mystery enveloping the commission so worked upon Mozart, who was already ill at the time, that he came to regard the strange emissary as one sent by Heaven to warn him of his own approaching death.

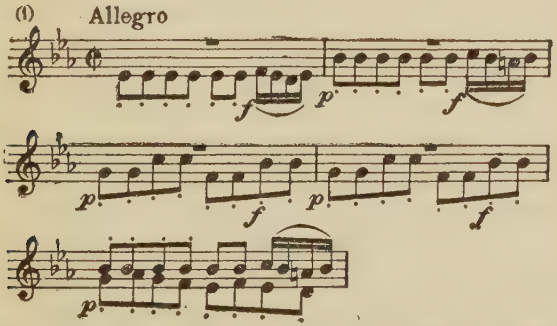
The Requiem, which was ultimately left unfinished, was interrupted in August and September by the composition of a new Italian opera *La Clemenza di Tito* (*The Clemency of Titus*), which Mozart wrote for the coronation of Leopold II at Prague.

The opera was a failure, and Mozart returned to Vienna, in the middle of September, more depressed than ever.

The first performance of *The Magic Flute* took place on the 30th of the same month; Mozart, from the piano, conducted the first two performances, his pupil Süssmayer (who completed the Requiem) turning over for him; Schikaneder, of course, was the Papageno, and Josefa Hofer the Queen of Night. After a doubtful reception on the first night the opera quickly became a tremendous success; it ran for more than a hundred consecutive nights in Vienna, was taken up by Prague in the following year and by Frankfurt-on-the-Main in 1793, and after that by many of the other German theatres. So popular was it, and so deep the impression made by it, that Goethe, in 1798, planned to write a second part to the opera.

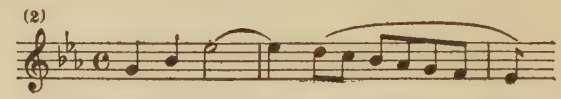
Years of privation and overwork had undermined Mozart's constitution, and in November 1791 he had to take to his bed. There, watch in hand, he would follow in imagination the performance of *The Magic Flute* in the theatre. He died of malignant typhus fever at one o'clock in the morning of the 5th December, 1791.

The overture to *The Magic Flute* begins with an adagio preamble in which we hear first of all three solemn chords in the brass that are said to have a Masonic significance. The allegro begins with a theme in the second violins:

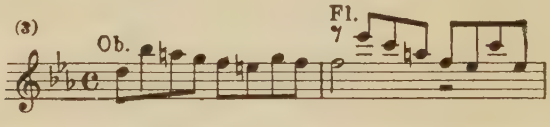


that is developed fugally, the first violins taking it up in the fifth bar of our quotation. When it is later given out in the orginal key

by the violas and 'cellos, an octave lower than at first, it is combined with a counter-theme:



These two main themes are worked out together for a while and are succeeded by a fresh theme that commences in the oboe and is echoed in the flute:



The accompaniment to this is a slightly modified version of the main theme (No. 1). The form of the overture is a combination of the fugue form and sonata form. The first section comes to a pause on the dominant of the main key (B flat), and once more we hear the three Masonic chords, this time, of course, in the key of B flat, the dominant of E flat. Nos. 1, 2, and 3 are then developed, as before, in a fascinating blend of the sonata and the fugue.

ACT I

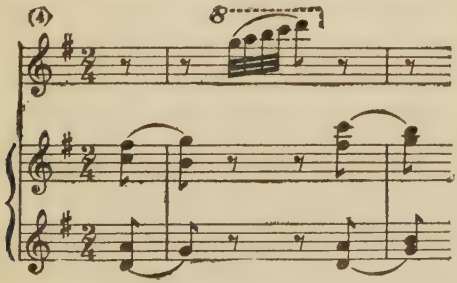
One of the evidences of a change of plan in the book of *The Magic Flute* is that in the stage directions for the opening scene Tamino is described as wearing the costume of a Japanese prince. This direction is of course disregarded in modern productions, where Tamino is usually shown in a kind of Greek costume. There are so many changes of scene in the opera that the method of production varies greatly from theatre to theatre; we shall therefore, in the following analysis, deal with the settings only in the most general way.

We are to understand that the action takes place in Egypt, in the neighbourhood of a temple of Isis. The first scene is in the open country. After an agitated orchestral introduction, in which the hurry and breathlessness of Tamino are realistically sug-

gested, the hero enters, pursued by a great serpent; Tamino has a bow, but no arrows. He cries out in terror to the gods for protection, and falls exhausted upon a rock. Thereupon three veiled Ladies appear, each carrying a silver spear. They slay the serpent, congratulate themselves on their achievement, and then begin to sing the praises of the comeliness of the youth whom they have rescued from death. Were their hearts susceptible to love, they declare, it is to this fair youth that they would succumb. They will carry the news of his coming to their Queen; perhaps he will be able to bring back to her the peace that, it seems, has fled her.

Each suggests that the others shall be the bearer of the news, and each in turn politely but firmly declines to leave her susceptible sisters with so attractive a young man. Unable to agree on the matter, they at last decide to leave together, which they do after singing a charming trio, in which each of them looks forward to renewing the agreeable acquaintance as soon as possible.

When they have left the stage Tamino awakes, looks round him apprehensively and asks, "Where am I?" He is relieved to see the serpent dead at his feet, but cannot understand how the monster died. Hearing a man approaching the valley he hides himself. The merry strain of No. 5 is heard in the orchestra, interrupted occasionally by a flourish on the Pan-pipe:



at first in the distance, then drawing nearer; and at last Papageno comes upon the scene. He is in a costume mostly composed of feathers; on his back is a large bird-cage containing birds; he

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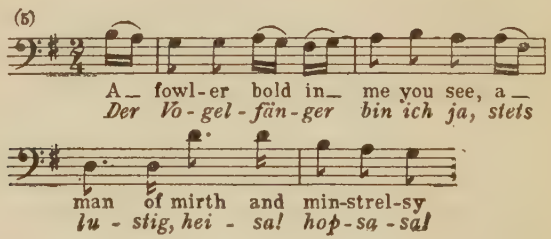
holds his Pan-pipe in both hands and now and then gives a flourish on it by way of accompaniment to his song, in which, for all the world as if he were presenting us with his business card, he tells us that he is a birdcatcher by profession, a man of mirth, known to old and young throughout the land; but there is an even finer trade than his, he continues — he would capture pretty girls if he could:



He is just going off with a final flourish when Tamino stops him, and a dialogue in prose ensues. Each asks the other who he is. When Tamino tells Papageno that he is of royal blood, the simple birdcatcher confesses that that is beyond him; whereupon Tamino explains that his father is a prince who rules over many lands and tribes. "Lands? Tribes? Prince?" asks the innocent Papageno; "are there then other lands and tribes beyond these mountains?" When he hears that there are many thousands of them, his first simple thought is of the glorious opportunities there must be to sell birds there.

He can give the stranger no useful information as to his own country. He does not know who rules over it, or how he himself came into it; he knows only that he has a little thatched cottage to shelter him from the cold and the rain, that he lives, like other people, by eating and drinking, and that he earns his food and drink by catching birds for the Queen of Night and her Ladies.

The Queen of Night! ejaculates Tamino aside; this must be the great person of whom he has already heard. Has Papageno seen her? No mortal has seen her, Papageno replies. "This then must be the Queen of Night of whom my father so often told me; but I cannot understand how I lost my way and came to these parts.

This man is evidently no ordinary person; perhaps he is one of her attendant spirits! "

Papageno, who is a timorous fellow at heart, does not like the way the stranger stares at him; and when Tamino says that he looks more like a bird than a man and tries to approach him, Papageno, his heart in his mouth, bids him stand back, for when he is roused he has the strength of a giant; adding under his breath, " If I don't manage to frighten him soon I shall cut and run! " If he has the strength of a giant, Tamino continues, no doubt it was he who killed the serpent and saved his life. Papageno starts in terror at the mention and the sight of the serpent, but finding that it is dead, and that the stranger is crediting him with the killing of it, he takes full credit for the deed, and boasts that he did it without weapons, by the mere strength of his arm.

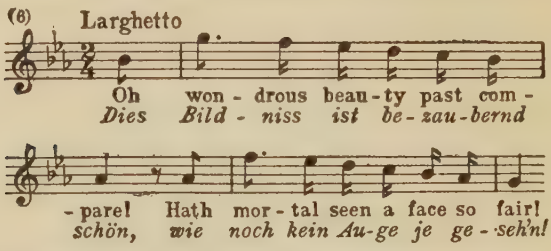
He is interrupted by the re-entry of the Three Ladies, who greet him with a warning " Papageno! " He explains to Tamino that these are the Ladies who take his birds every day and give him wine, bread, and fruit in exchange for them. " They must be very beautiful," says the unsophisticated Tamino. If they were, Papageno replies, they would not veil their faces; but as another warning " Papageno! " comes from the Ladies he diplomatically adds that he never say anything so beautiful in all his life.

But the Ladies are not to be placated by this flattery. Papageno is to be punished by order of the Queen for his lies and boasting: no wine for him to-day — only cold water; no bread — only a stone; no sweet figs — but a golden padlock for his mendacious mouth; perhaps this will teach him not to tell lies to strangers. They ask him if *now* he sticks to it that he killed the serpent.

Papageno, to whose mouth one of the Ladies has fastened the padlock, can only shake his head and mumble. He does not even know who did kill the serpent; and the First Lady informs Tamino that it was she and her companions who saved him. She hands him a portrait sent him by the Queen of Night; it is that of her daughter; if the features do not find him indifferent, then happiness, honour, and fame await him. Assuring him that they

shall meet again, they go off with a parting sarcasm or two for Papageno, who, greatly embarrassed, also makes his exit.

Tamino, who has been absorbed in contemplation of the portrait, sings an ardent aria in praise of the maiden's beauty:


(6) Larghetto
Oh won - drous beau - ty past com -
Dies Bild - niss ist be - zau - bernd
- pare! Hath mor - tal seen a face so fair!
schön, wie noch kein Au - ge je ge - seh'n!

Could he only find her, he cries, clasp her to his breast and make her his for ever!

The lovely aria over, the Three Ladies enter once more. Their royal mistress, it seems, has heard every word he said and has been favourably impressed by his appearance; if he has as much courage as tenderness he will be able to rescue the unhappy Pamina from the evil magician who one day seized her among her favourite cypress trees and carried her off.

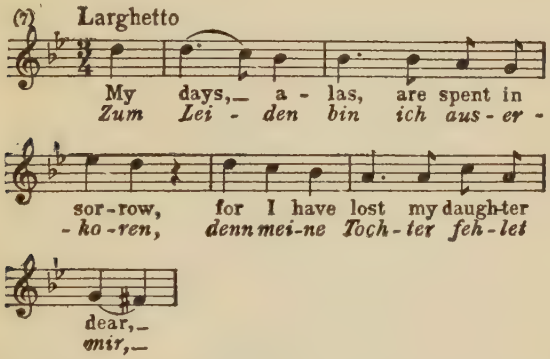
Tamino is horrified at the information, and is drawing upon his imagination as to what may have happened to the girl when the Three Ladies reprovingly bid him not to be so doubtful of virtue; whatever miseries Pamina may have suffered, her virtue is still intact, for it is proof against both compulsion and flattery.

In some English versions the Ladies inform Tamino that the wicked magician is Sarastro, the High Priest of the Sun, but in the original libretto there is no mention of the name at this point or any hint that the captor of Pamina is the High Priest of the Sun. The malefactor so far is evidently the conventional evil magician of the popular stories; according to the Ladies, he has the power to assume any shape at will, and it was by disguising himself that he managed to decoy Pamina away.

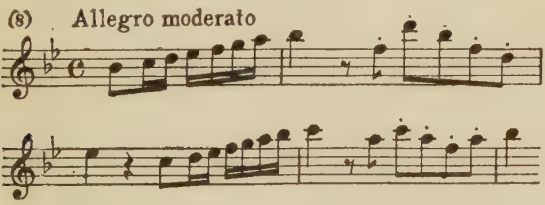
The ardent Tamino is just imploring to be taken where he may rescue the maiden when there is a clap of thunder and the scene grows dark. These are the presages of the coming of the Queen of

Night, who now appears in the moonlight, standing in front of her throne among the stars. In a majestic recitative she exhorts the youth not to be afraid, for he is pious, gentle, and good — the sort of youth, indeed, fitted to bring consolation to a sorrowing mother's heart.

In a mournful aria:


(7) Larghetto
My days,_ a - las, are spent in
Zum Lei - den bin ich aus - er -
sor - row, for I have lost my daugh-ter
- ko - ren, denn mei-ne Toch - ter feh - let
dear,_
mir,_

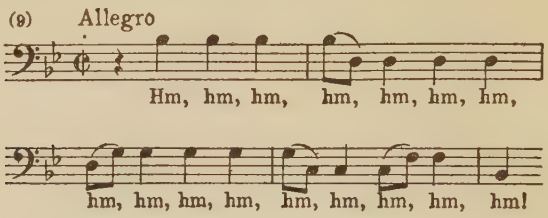
she tells him how all happiness departed from her on the day when the miscreant carried off her daughter in spite of the anguished cries of the victim. Even the Queen's might was insufficient to rescue her; but the desired deed can be accomplished by the Prince, and when he returns victorious, she assures him in a brilliant piece of coloratura:



Pamina shall be his.

There is another clap of thunder, and the Queen disappears, followed by her Ladies. It grows light again, and Tamino asks himself whether what he has seen and heard is reality or a dream. With a prayer to the gods to strengthen his arm and uphold his courage he is about to leave the stage when Papageno enters. He

points sadly to the padlock as excuse for the mumbling of which alone he is now capable:



Tamino assures him that he is sorry for him but is unable to help him. The Three Ladies return, and after a few aphorisms on the wickedness of lying they remove the padlock from Papageno's mouth, leaving him free to join with them and Tamino in a quintet.

The First Lady gives Tamino a golden flute, a gift from the Queen, the magic of which, she assures him, will protect him in emergencies; it can master the passions of men, bring happiness to the sad, and even turn the bachelor's thoughts in the direction of love; it is a flute worth more than crowns and gold, for it can bring the whole world peace and contentment.

Papageno asks if he may now retire from the company, and is a little taken aback when the Ladies tell him that the Queen has appointed him to accompany the Prince on his rescue expedition. Papageno protests energetically: have not the Ladies themselves told him what a wild beast Sarastro is? The magician will have him plucked and roasted and thrown to his dogs! The Ladies try to persuade him that the Prince will protect him, but Papageno bluntly consigns the Prince to the devil; he knows what will happen — as soon as danger comes the Prince will slip away and leave him in the lurch! The Ladies give him a chime of bells which, they tell him, will protect him and the Prince. " How shall we find the way to the mountain? " asks Tamino; and in a charming trio the Ladies tell him that three Boys, young, beautiful, and wise, will direct and accompany them, giving them counsel when necessary; and bidding the pair farewell, the Ladies depart.

The scene changes to a room, splendidly furnished in the Egyptian style, in Sarastro's palace.

In the original libretto there is an opening scene that is now omitted in performance. In this, three slaves are seen bearing carpets, cushions, and a Turkish table. They are rejoicing over the latest piece of news; it seems that Monostatos, the wicked Moorish slave of Sarastro, had designs on the virtue of Pamina, but at the critical moment the maiden called on Sarastro; this scared the Moor, and while he was standing motionless with fright Pamina made her escape to the canal, jumped into a boat, and made for the palm woods. The slaves rejoiced to think of the punishment the hated Monostatos will receive from Sarastro, but just then the Moor's voice is heard behind the scenes, roughly ordering them to bring chains; and looking out they see, to their regret, that he has Pamina captive once more.

In performance the scene opens with Monostatos dragging Pamina in. At his orders the slaves fetter her, and she falls senseless on a couch. Monostatos sends the slaves away, after having rejected Pamina's appeal to give her death in preference to any other fate he may have in contemplation for her.

One of Mozart's charming little phrases now trips out in the violins, and Papageno appears in the doorway; it appears that he has strayed there by accident, and, having heard voices, thought he might as well enter. He is just addressing the beautiful maiden whom he sees before him when he and Monostatos catch sight of each other. Each is scared out of his wits, taking the other for the devil himself; and in an amusing passage each implores the other to spare him. Backing away from each other they run off in different directions.

Pamina awakes with a cry of " Mother! Mother! " and is again bewailing her fate when Papageno re-enters, calling himself a fool for having been so frightened: there are plenty of black birds in the world, so why should there not be black men? he asks. Is the maiden by any chance the daughter of the Queen of Night? If so, he has news for her. He introduces himself as Papageno, her Majesty's birdcatcher, of whom Pamina remembers that she has

heard, though she has never seen him. Papageno, taking out the portrait that Tamino has given him and comparing it with Pamina, runs over the points of resemblance and difference: " Blue eyes (black) — really blue (black — red lips — really red — blond hair (brown) — everything seems correct except the hands and the feet. According to the picture you have neither hands nor feet; anyhow none are shown here." (We can imagine the guffaws that Schikaneder would draw from his audience in passages like these.)

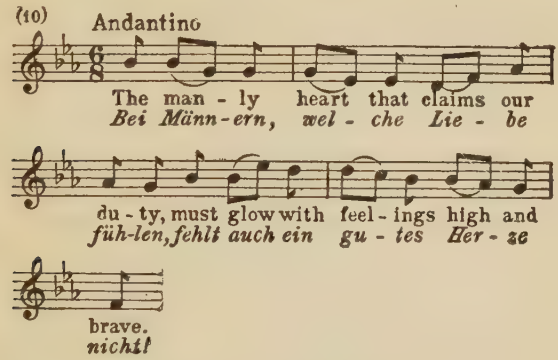
This, indeed, is Papageno's scene throughout. With a great wealth of words, most of which are omitted in modern performances, he tells Pamina of the events of the morning — how the Ladies gave the Prince her portrait, how he fell in love with the original at first sight, and how he has been appointed by her mother to rescue her.

Pamina is gratified by this intelligence, but cannot refrain from asking why, if the Prince is so madly in love with her, he is so long in coming to rescue her. Papageno has to explain that the three beautiful Boys whom the Ladies promised as guides having failed to appear, the Prince sent him on in advance to announce his coming. Pamina compliments him on his courage, but warns him that if Sarastro finds him there he will die a painful death. " In that case," says Papageno, " the sooner we go the better "; and Pamina agrees with him, for according to the position of the sun it must be near midday, and at midday Sarastro is in the habit of returning from the hunt.

Pamina for a moment has her doubts: what if Papageno were merely a decoy — another of Sarastro's wicked spirits? Papageno assures her that there is nothing wicked about him; he is as good a spirit as was ever on the earth; and, convinced by the evidence of the portrait that her mother has really a hand in the affair, she puts her fears aside again.

Papageno accepts her compliments on his good-heartedness, but confides to her his secret sorrow — Papageno has no Papagena, no little wife, not even a sweetheart, and there are times when he would be glad of a bit of pleasant company. Pamina exhorts him

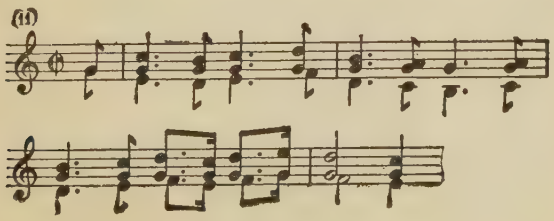
to have patience, for heaven will surely send him a little friend of his own sort one of these days; and this gives the cue for an exquisite little duet on the universality of love and the depth of its joys:


(10)
Andantino
The man - ly heart that claims our
Bei Männ-ern, wel - che Lie - be
du - ty, must glow with feel - ings high and
füh-len, fehlt auch ein gu - tes Her - ze
brave.
nicht!

They go out singing, and the scene changes.

We see a grove, with three Temples. The centre one, which is the largest, bears the inscription, " Temple of Wisdom." The right-hand one is inscribed, " Temple of Reason," and that on the left, " Temple of Nature." The Temples are joined by colonnades. The three Boys (Genii), each with a silver palm-branch in his hand, enter, leading Tamino, from whose neck hangs the magic flute. From this point onward, in spite of an occasional touch of comedy, the opera is filled with a high seriousness. It is henceforth dominated by Sarastro and the moral ideas of which he is the embodiment.

In a solemn trio:

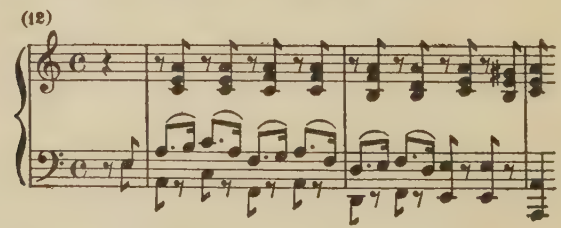


the Genii, having conducted Tamino to his goal, take leave of him, exhorting him, through whatever dangers may beset him, to be " steadfast, silent, and obedient."

Left alone, Tamino muses upon their words, which have graven themselves deeply on his heart, and surveys the three Temples, which, he thinks, must surely be the abode of the gods. Conscious of the purity of his purpose and the nobility of his mission, he goes to the right-hand entrance, but is sternly ordered to " Stand back! " by a bass voice from within. He is similarly repulsed from the left-hand entrance. Then he knocks at the central door. An aged priest (the Orator) appears on the threshold, and a long dialogue in recitative ensues.

Tamino learns that he has come to the Temple of Sarastro, whom he forthwith reviles as the master of cruelty and lies; the proof, he says, is a woman's tears that he has seen. The Priest assures him he has been deceived: " A woman does little, but chatters much; and it is like a boy to believe her." It is true that Sarastro has taken Pamina from her mother, but in time he will set forth his reasons for that act.

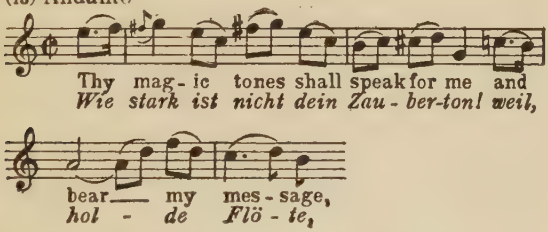
Eagerly Tamino asks where Pamina is, but the Priest only replies, " Dear son, that I am not yet permitted to tell thee: my tongue is bound by a solemn oath." " When will the bond of silence be broken? " asks Tamino; and the Priest, to one of the most solemn musical phrases in the whole opera:



replies, " When thou art led by friendship's hand to join our Temple's sacred band." Voices from an invisible chorus bid Tamino have courage and seek for the light, and assures him that Pamina still lives.

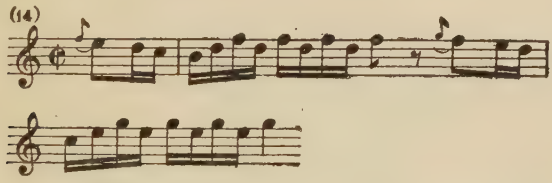
Tamino takes up his flute, and to show his gratitude to the mighty ones he plays a melody upon it, which he then makes the main tune of the song that follows:

(13) Andante



The aria is interspersed throughout with flute obbligati, of which the following is an example:

(14)



and in the original Vienna production wild animals came out to listen — evidence of the power of the magic flute to charm all created things.

At the end of this aria Tamino calls for Pamina. No reply comes from the maiden, but he is answered behind the scenes by Papageno's usual flourish (No. 4) on his Pan-pipe. Perhaps Papageno has found Pamina, he surmises; and he hastens away to find him in one direction just as Papageno and Pamina come on from the opposite side. They are in flight, and searching anxiously for Tamino. Papageno gives his usual whistle, which is answered from a distance by the flute, and the pair are just about to make off in quest of Tamino when they are intercepted by Monostatos and the slaves.

The latter are about to put fetters on Papageno and Pamina, and the situation begins to look desperate, when Papageno, as a last chance, plays a delightfully naïve melody on the magic bells

given him by the Three Ladies. The effect is magical; just as Tamino's flute enchanted the animals, Papageno's Glockenspiel sets Monostatos and the slaves dancing and singing in the most absurd fashion. They finally dance themselves off the stage, and Papageno and Pamina sing a charming little duet in praise of the music of the bells; had everyone such a chime, they say, foes would be turned to friends, and everyone would live in the most beautiful harmony.

They are interrupted by the sound of voices behind the scenes, crying, " Long life to Sarastro! " The frightened Papageno wishes he were a mouse, that he might creep into a cranny and hide, but Pamina bravely swears that for her part she will face Sarastro and tell him the truth.

In the original, Sarastro was supposed to come in on a triumphal car drawn by lions; but modern theatres that lack a menagerie have to be content with a more modest production. Sarastro enters in great pomp, accompanied by Priests, men-at-arms, women, and slaves. He steps out of the car, and Pamina, throwing herself at his feet, confesses that she had tried to escape, but only to evade the unwelcome attentions of the Moor. In a grave and tender melody Sarastro comforts her with the assurance that he knows the secret of her heart, and that while he will never compel her to love, it is too soon as yet to set her free. She must put her mother from her thoughts, for restoration to her would be the end of all her happiness: " A man must guide your steps, for woman alone can never find the path that leads to wisdom."

Monostatos now runs in, dragging with him Tamino. Tamino and Pamina fall into each other's arms with ecstatic cries, but are parted by Monostatos, who, kneeling before Sarastro, tells how the audacious youth, aided by this other fellow who is half bird, half man, had tried to run off with the maiden. Modestly Monostatos claims the reward for his watchfulness and devotion, and gets it from the undeceived Sarastro — in the form of a sound bastinado.

The protesting Moor having been dragged off by the slaves,

Sarastro orders his followers to lead the two young strangers to the Temple of Probation, first veiling their heads. Tamino and Pamina are veiled by the Priests, and while Tamino and Papageno are led off to the right of the scene by two of the Priests, Sarastro, taking Pamina by the hand, goes with her to the middle door of the Temple, the chorus the while, to the accompaniment of the solemn trumpets and trombones, singing in praise of Sarastro, virtue, and justice.

ACT II

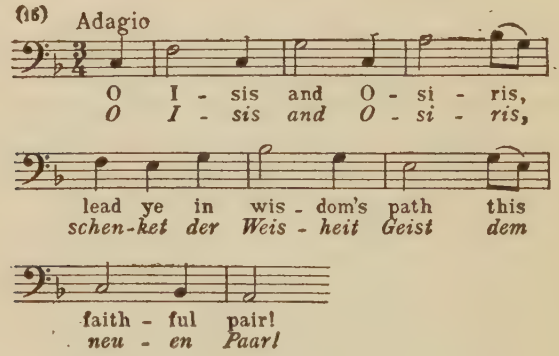
The second act is mainly concerned with the initiation of Tamino and Pamina into the mysteries. The opening setting is a palm grove. Sarastro and the Priests enter to the strain of a solemn march, at the conclusion of which Sarastro addresses the Priests in speech.

The Prince Tamino, he tells them, is waiting at the northern gate of the Temple, desirous to have the veil removed from him that he may see the sacred light. He assures the Priests, in reply to their questions, that Tamino is virtuous, that he can be silent, and that he is beneficent. The Priests blow their trumpets in sign of approval (the solemn brass chords with which the overture opens), and Sarastro, continuing, tells them that the gods have destined Pamina for this youth; it was for that reason that he removed her from the keeping of her mother, " that woman who, swollen with her power, thinks to dazzle the people with superstitions and destroy our Temple; but this she shall not accomplish." (Schikaneder's audience would no doubt take this as a fairly pointed reference to the anti-Masonic Empress Maria Theresa.)

Let Tamino, then, be initiated into the mysteries, continues Sarastro, and united with Pamina, and so ensure the safety of the Temple, the triumph of virtue, and the chastisement of evil-doers. Once more Sarastro and the Priests blow the usual chords three times on their trumpets. The first Priest (the Orator) asks whether Tamino will have strength to bear the ordeals that await him: " He is a Prince," he objects. " He is more," replies Sarastro; " he is

a man." If, unable to endure to the end, he should perish in his youth, he will then be in the hands of Isis and Osiris, " and will know the joys of the gods sooner than we "; and again the three-fold chord is sounded.

Sarastro orders the Priests to conduct Tamino and his companion into the forecourt of the Temple, where the Orator will instruct them in their duty to the gods. Then Sarastro sings his majestic aria, the invocation to the gods, " O Isis and Osiris ":


(16) Adagio
O I - sis and O - si - ris,
O I - sis and O - si - ris,
lead ye in wis - dom's path this
schen-ket der Weis - heit Geist dem
faith - ful pair!
neu - en Paar!

to which the trombones lend their usual solemn colour.

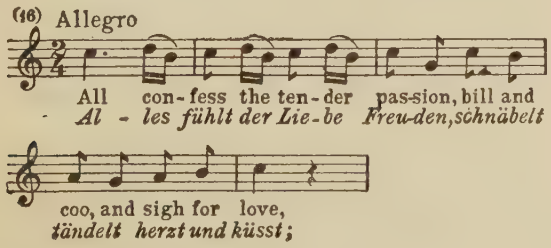
The scene changes to the forecourt of the Temple. It is night, and distant thunder is heard as Tamino and Papageno are led in by the Orator and the second Priest, who remove the probationers' veils and then leave them. Papageno is horribly scared by the darkness and the thunder, but will not admit it; he pretends that if he feels shivers all down his back it is because a fever is coming on. " Be a man! " exhorts Tamino; and we can imagine the laugh Schikaneder would evoke with his reply, " I'd rather be a girl! "

Two Priests enter with lights, and the strangers are catechised. Tamino declares that it is friendship and love that have brought him within the Temple walls, and that for these he is ready to lay down his life if need be. He seeks wisdom and Pamina's love as his reward. Papageno, for his part, does not care a rap for wisdom; he is a simple child of nature, he says, wanting nothing more than food, drink, and sleep, and, if he could find it, a little wife into the bargain.

Hopes are held out to him of a wife, pretty, young, and feathered like himself, and bearing the name of Papagena. He prudently asks for a sight of the lady before he commits himself to matrimony, and is warned that though he may see her he must not speak to her till the appointed time. The same law of silence is imposed upon Tamino with regard to Pamina; this, indeed, is the first stage of his probation. The two Priests sing a duet warning Tamino and Papageno in particular, and the world in general, against the wiles of woman, and go out, taking the lights with them.

Tamino is just exhorting the frightened Papageno to be patient, for all this is the will of the gods, when the Three Ladies enter. They have been sent by the Queen of Night to warn Tamino against the trickery of the Priests, who will work his ruin, for whoever joins their band is doomed to everlasting perdition. Tamino sternly rejects their blandishments, while Papageno keeps interjecting naïvely comic remarks characteristic of his own Sancho Panza-like point of view. Disturbed by a chorus of the Priests behind the scenes, cursing these women who have profaned the sanctuary, the Three Ladies sink down into the earth, whereupon Papageno falls prostrate in terror. The Orator and the two Priests re-enter, congratulate Tamino on having been so steadfast, throw a veil over his head, and lead him away for further trials, Papageno following them in the company of the Priests.

The scene changes to a garden; Pamina is lying sleeping, and Monostatos is gazing longingly at her; from his opening speech we realise that even a good bastinadoing has not been able to damp the fire of this irrepressible amorist. He thinks he might venture just one kiss at any rate, and in a lively song:

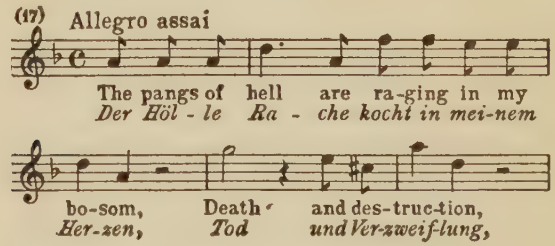

(16) Allegro
All con-fess the ten-der pas-sion, bill and
Al - les fühlt der Lie-be Freu-den, schnäbelt
coo, and sigh for love,
tändelt herzt und küsst;

he asks why, seeing that love is universal, he should be barred from it merely because he is black. A kiss he means to have, and if the moon is likely to be shocked at the sight, let it close its eye!

He is interrupted in his fell purpose by the Queen of Night, who enters from the back and dramatically bids him begone. Pamina's ejaculation of " Mother! " apprises him that the newcomer is the Queen, and he sneaks off into safety.

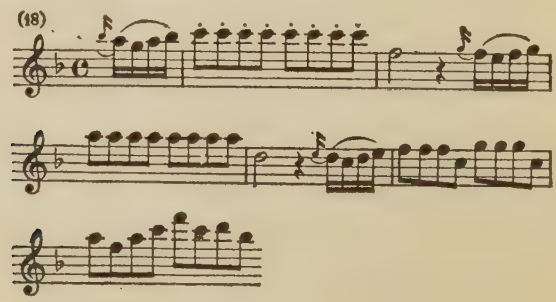
Pamina, who still believes in her mother, suggests that they shall fly together, but the Queen confesses that she can no longer shield her daughter; when Pamina's father died, it seems, he handed over to Sarastro the sevenfold Shield of the Sun, and the power that goes along with it. Only one chance remains; Pamina is to take the dagger she now offers her, kill Sarastro, and bring her mother the Shield of the Sun. The horrified Pamina protests, but the Queen imperiously silences her and breaks out into the celebrated coloratura aria.

(17) Allegro assai


The pangs of hell are ra-ging in my
Der Höl - le Ra - che kocht in mei-nem
bo-som, Death and des-truc-tion,
Her-zen, Tod und Ver-zweif-lung,

in which she casts all tender thoughts from her and calls for the vengeance of hell upon Sarastro. For a soprano who has the F *in altissimo* in her voice some of the coloratura passages present magnificent opportunities for display:

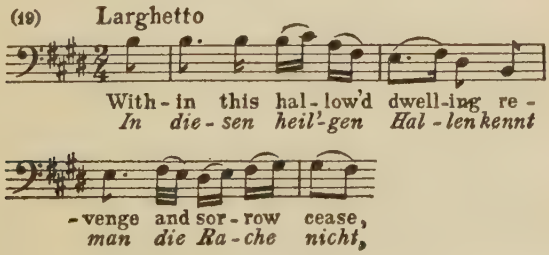
(18)



After a last vigorous cry for vengeance the Queen of Night disappears, and Pamina, left with the dagger in her hand, is once more protesting that she cannot shed blood when Monostatos, rushing in and snatching the dagger from her, tells her that he now has both her and her mother in his power. There is only one way, continues the dusky blackmailer, by which Pamina can save herself — she must love *him.*

Pamina's tremulous ejaculation, " Ye gods! " seems amply justified under the circumstances. She falls on her knees and implores the Moor to spare her, but his only reply is to offer the stern alternative of love or death. Maddened at her refusal he is just about to stab her, when Sarastro comes between them and hurls him back. Monostatos drops on his knees and tries to justify himself by saying that Pamina intended to take Sarastro's life, but Sarastro, with the uncomplimentary remark that the Moor's soul is as black as his face, orders him away. But Monostatos, who in his way is as simple a child of nature as Papageno, manages to raise a last laugh from the audience by saying as he goes out, " If I can't have the daughter, I'll try my luck with the mother! "

Pamina begins to plead for her mother, but Sarastro gently interrupts her. He knows everything, he says; the Queen of Night plots vengeance against him in the subterranean chambers of the Temple, but if heaven grants Tamino courage and steadfastness in his trials Pamina shall be his, and her mother will retire baffled to her mountain. As for himself, he declares, in perhaps the noblest of all the noble melodies in *The Magic Flute:*



he knows no thought of vengeance, for the law of their community is friendship and love.

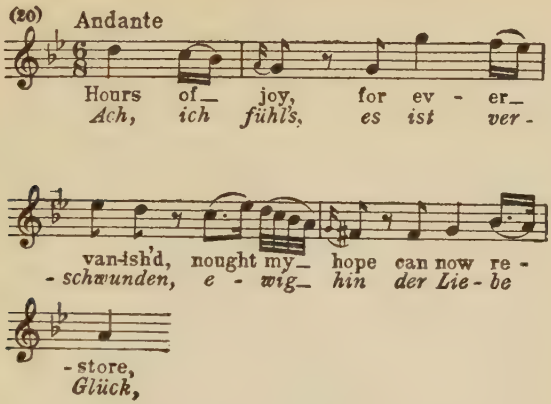
ACT III

The scene changes once more to a hall, into which Tamino and Papageno, unveiled, are led by the two Priests. They are told to remain there alone, and, as soon as they hear the trumpets sound, to proceed in the direction of these. The Priests leave them with a parting warning to them to remember their oath of silence, Papageno being further told that whoever breaks the silence in that sacred place is struck down by the gods with thunder and lightning.

But nothing in heaven or earth or the waters under the earth can keep Papageno's tongue quiet for long, and in spite of Tamino's attempts to hush him down he persists in chattering away. An ugly old woman enters with a cup of water which she offers to Papageno, and the birdcatcher welcomes the opportunity for a little sprightly conversation after his own heart. He learns, to his surprise, that the old woman is just eighteen years and two minutes old, and has a sweetheart just a little older than herself, by name Papageno. She is just about to tell him her own name when there is a crash of thunder and she hobbles away as fast as she can.

The three Genii now enter, carrying a table spread with food and drink, the magic flute, and Papageno's chime of bells. They greet the pair, they say, for the second time, now within Sarastro's own domain; he sends them the flute and the bells that have been taken from them, and food to refresh them; at their third meeting their virtue shall find its reward. They go out with a parting admonition to Tamino to be brave, for the goal is near, and to Papageno to be silent.

While Tamino is playing upon his flute and Papageno is devoting himself to the food and wine, Pamina enters and runs towards Tamino, who, however, mindful of his vow of silence, motions to her to depart. She naturally does not understand his silence, and, thinking he no longer loves her, bewails her vanished happiness in a mournful aria:


(20) Andante
Hours of_ joy, for ev - er_
Ach, ich fühl's, es ist ver -
van-ish'd, nought my_ hope can now re -
- schwunden, e - wig_ hin der Lie - be
- store,
Glück,

Papageno, who has been feasting joyously, is just praising Sarastro's cook and cellar-master when the trombones are heard behind the scenes. Tamino motions to Papageno to go with him, but the birdcatcher, according to the original libretto, refuses to leave his excellent meal "even if Sarastro were to let loose his six lions on him." Thereupon six fearsome lions enter and threaten Papageno, who cries out in terror to the gods and Tamino. The hero blows a strain on his flute, and the lions, their angry passions calmed by music, go out again. This little episode is of course omitted in modern performances.

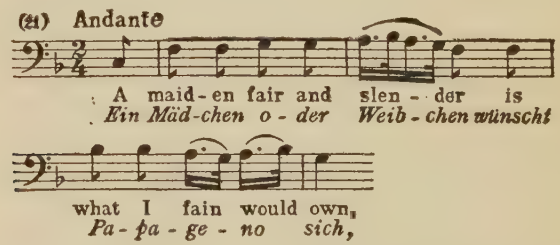
The trombones ring out again, and Tamino drags his companion out, Papageno protesting that there is no hurry, as they will get there in quite time enough to be plucked and roasted.

In the next scene, which may be staged somewhere near the Pyramids, Sarastro and the Priests (with torches) enter to the strain of a solemn invocation to Isis and Osiris, to whose service the noble youth is about to dedicate himself. At Sarastro's command Tamino, veiled, is brought in, followed by Pamina, also veiled; she is told that Tamino is waiting to bid her a last farewell. Sarastro removes Tamino's veil, and Pamina runs towards him, but he orders her back. There follows a short trio, Pamina again mourning her incomprehensible fate, Tamino strengthening himself for the coming ordeal, and Sarastro bidding both be brave,

for when the trial is over they shall see each other again. Sarastro takes Tamino by the hand and leads him away, the two Priests departing in the opposite direction with Pamina.

When the stage is empty Papageno enters, scared out of his wits and vowing that if he can find Tamino he will never leave him again. He goes first to a door on the left and then to one on the right, and from each he is ordered back by a voice behind the door. A flash of fire and a roll of thunder add to his terror. Thoroughly sorry for himself, he bursts into tears.

The Orator enters and tells him that he deserves to be sentenced to wander for ever in the dark passages of the earth, but the gods, it seems, have pardoned him, though he is too degraded ever to know the heavenly joys of the initiated. The greatest joy he can think of at the moment, says Papageno, is a glass of wine. The Orator leaves him, the stage grows dark for a moment, and a great cup filled with wine comes up out of the earth. Tossing the wine down, Papageno feels so happy that he bursts into a song in praise of love:

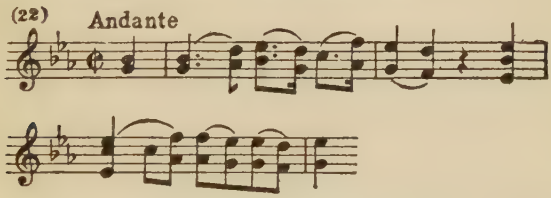


Ah, if only he had a little turtle-dove of his own, how happy he would be! (The melody is derived in part from the old German chorale, "Nun lob mein' Seel' den Herren.")

The Old Woman comes in again, dancing and supporting herself on a stick. She tells him that if he will swear to be true to her she will love him very tenderly, but when he asks for time to think it over she sternly warns him that if he delays giving her his hand he will be imprisoned and put on bread and water for the rest of his days. This is too much for Papageno: better an old wife, he says, than none at all! Giving her his hand, he promises

to be true to her until, he adds under his breath, he meets with someone prettier. Instantly the Old Woman is transformed into a young one, covered with feathers. Papageno manages to stammer out " Pa-pa-papagena! " and is just about to embrace her when the Orator comes in and, declaring that he is not yet worthy of her, drags Papagena out, and, when poor Papageno attempts to follow, pushes him back. Papageno runs out after them, crying piteously, " Papagena! Papagena! "

The next scene shows us a palm garden. The Three Genii enter and sing a trio in greeting to the rising sun:



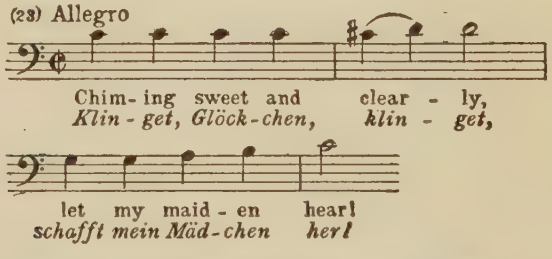
They are interrupted by the entry of Pamina, in a state of great distraction, and carrying the dagger she received from the Queen of Night. They are in time to prevent her from stabbing herself; they bid her not to despair, as Tamino still loves her, and offer to conduct her to him.

In the next scene we see two Men in Armour standing at each side of a door in a rock; on one side of the door, through a grating, there is visible fire, on the other water. After a solemn orchestral prelude, some of the material of which is used as accompaniment to the vocal melody that follows, Tamino is brought in by the Priests, and the two Men in Armour sing in octaves of the necessity of ordeal by fire and water for him who would overcome the fear of death. The broad, somewhat stiff melody is that of the old chorale, " Ach Gott vom Himmel sieh darein," with a slight modification of Mozart's own at the end.

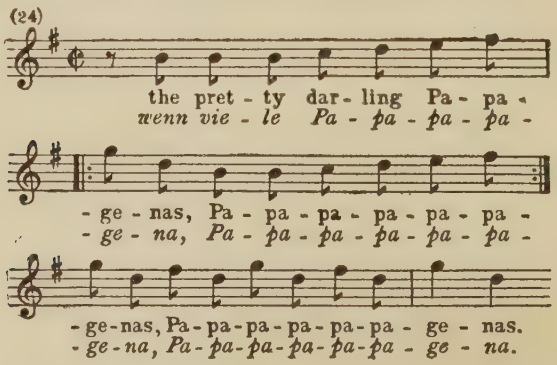
Just as Tamino is swearing his readiness to bear any trial, the voice of Pamina is heard outside. She is brought in, and the lovers are now permitted to speak to each other. Lovingly and trustingly, hand in hand, they enter the doors and are seen passing through

the fire, Tamino playing on his flute. They reappear on the stage, untouched by the flames, and pass through the next ordeal, that of water, whereupon they are welcomed at the now open gate of the Temple by Sarastro and the Priests and conducted inside.

The scene changes to a garden. We hear Papageno's Pan-pipe flourish, and the now doleful birdcatcher enters, carrying a rope with a noose; he has lost his Papagena, and means to hang himself. He prudently and hopefully takes as long as possible over the preliminaries, and delays so long that there is time for the Three Genii to enter and prevent him. At their command he performs on his magic bells:

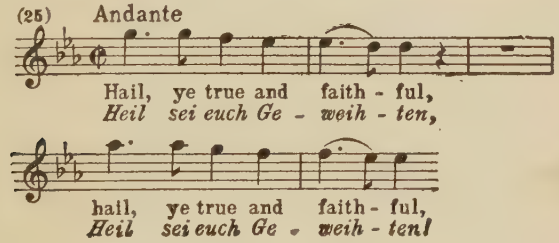


and the Genii, who have gone out for a moment, return with Papagena. There is a delicious duet between Papageno and Papagena, packed with the simple enchantment of which Mozart alone among musicians has ever had the secret; they will pair now, they say, and soon there will be a nest of little birds, first a little Papageno, then a little Papagena, then another Papageno, then another Papagena, and so, presumably, *ad infinitum:*


(24)
the pret - ty dar - ling Pa - pa -
wenn vie - le Pa - pa - pa - pa -
- ge - nas, Pa - pa - pa - pa - pa - pa -
- ge - na, Pa - pa - pa - pa - pa - pa -
- ge-nas, Pa-pa-pa-pa-pa-pa - ge - nas.
- ge-na, Pa-pa-pa-pa-pa-pa - ge - na.

The happy couple go out arm-in-arm, and the scene changes for the last time.

It is night, in a setting of rocky country. Monostatos enters, beckoning forward the Queen of Night and the Three Ladies, who have lighted torches in their hands. They are approaching the Temple to wreak vengeance on Sarastro and the good Priests, the promised reward for Monostatos's treachery being the hand of Pamina. There is a crash of thunder, and with a cry that their power is shattered the conspirators disappear. The Temple becomes visible, and in it Sarastro, Tamina, Pamina, the Genii, Priests, and others. The deeply impressive opera ends with a chorus of thanks to Isis and Osiris and congratulations to the young couple who by their courage, fidelity, and virtue have won through to beauty and wisdom:



THE Beethoven family, on its male side, was of Belgian extraction. We find it first near Louvain in the seventeenth century, and later at Antwerp. The composer, by reason of his thick black hair and his swarthy complexion, was often referred to by his friends as "the Spaniard"; and when we take into consideration the Spanish occupation of the Netherlands in the seventeenth century it is not at all improbable that there was a certain amount of Spanish blood in him.

Beethoven's grandfather, Louis van Beethoven, was born at Antwerp on the 23rd December, 1712, left home at about the age of nineteen, and two years later was settled at Bonn, on the Rhine, as a bass singer in the service of the Elector of Cologne, of whose territories Bonn was part. He died there in 1773, after forty-two years' service at the Court. He married in 1734; the son who survived him, Johann, was born in Bonn at the end of 1739 or the beginning of 1740; he too — a tenor — was part of the Court and theatrical establishment of the little town, which at the end of the century had a population of about nine thousand. His mother had been addicted to drink, and Johann inherited this failing from her.

In 1767 he married Maria Magdalena Haym (née Kewerich) a young widow of less than nineteen years; her father was head cook at the palace of Ehrenbreitstein. Three children survived her — Ludwig, the composer (probably born 16th December, 1770[1]), Caspar Anton Carl (baptised 8th April, 1774), and

[1] The exact date is not known for a certainty, as we have only the official record of the date of baptism. But as it was the custom of the country

Nikolaus Johann (baptised 2nd October, 1776). We shall hear more of both of these brothers in the sequel.

The mother was a serious woman, inclined to melancholia — a friend said she had never seen her laugh; the deaths of her father, her mother, and her first husband almost before she had reached the age of twenty may have predisposed her to gravity, and life with Johann, on an insufficient salary and with three boys to bring up, was not calculated to restore either her health or her spirits. Three other children did not survive infancy: one of them lived only six days, another only five, and the third two years and a half. Frau Beethoven died of consumption in 1787, at the age of forty.

The child Ludwig showed no such precocious gift for music as Mozart had done, and would perhaps not have been forced into the musical profession had his father not been in it himself; but it was necessary for the boy to help to increase the scanty income of the family as soon as possible, and the father gave him the rudiments of a musical education with an eye to a future post in the Elector's Kapelle. He received spasmodic instruction later from others, including Van den Eeden, the Court organist (then a very old man; he died in 1782), and from the latter's successor Neefe, a sound musician who gave the boy a good grounding in organ and piano playing and composition.

Ludwig was expert enough on the piano to perform in public when he was seven years old; and for a time he acted as assistant to Neefe at the organ as cembalist in the theatre orchestra, though without salary. It was not until the spring of 1784 that he was appointed assistant Court organist. Just about that time Elector Max Friedrich died; the theatrical company was dismissed with four weeks' wages, and the new Elector Maximilian Franz, wishing to economise at first, relied for some three years upon visiting companies for his theatrical fare. Beethoven thus had no duties

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at that time to baptise a child within twenty-four hours of its birth, and the baptismal entry was made in the parish records on the 16th December, we are fairly safe in taking the 16th as the birthday.

except as organist, and consequently could call a large amount of time his own for study and other work.

In the spring of 1787 he spent a little while in Vienna — how he obtained the money is not known for certain — and took a few lessons from Mozart, who is said to have prophesied that "one day he will give the world something to talk about." The last illness of his mother recalled him to Bonn, where he was visited by one of those fits of melancholy to which he was always subject; he suffered from asthma, and thought that he too was threatened with consumption.

When the Elector reconstituted his theatre in 1788, Beethoven entered the orchestra as violin player; in that capacity he served some four years, making the acquaintance of a large number of operas of all schools. By this time he was contributing materially to the income of the family; his father was giving way more and more to drink, and in 1789 he was pensioned off, half his salary being paid to him henceforth, the other half going to Ludwig as the new head of the family.

The young man's life must have been hard and cramped; even at this time he felt his own power and originality, and Bonn must have come to seem too small a field for the full development of his talents. Already, however, he had made friends who were, in various ways to be of the greatest service to him then and for many years after.

One of the most respected residents of the town was Frau von Breuning, who, at the age of twenty-eight, had been left a widow by the death of her husband, the Court Councillor von Breuning, who perished in a fire in the palace. She was well-to-do and lived in a fine house with her four children. One of these, Stephan, who was born in 1774, had been a pupil of Ries, the violinist, at the same time as Beethoven; and the two boys soon became fast friends. Beethoven was a constant visitor at the house, where he was treated by Frau von Breuning — a woman of high character, sound sense, and great tact and forbearance — as one of the children of the family; she could generally manage the wayward, moody, obstinate young genius when no one else could do anything with him.

Another friend and benefactor of these and later days was Ferdinand Ernst Gabriel Count Waldstein, a young scion of one of the noblest of the Austrian houses. He was born in 1762, and was therefore eight years older than Beethoven, whose acquaintance he seems to have made on a visit to Bonn in 1787. He not only loved music but practised it very competently. He was one of the first to sense the coming genius in Beethoven, and both with his purse and by his influence he did much to ease his path through these critical years of adolescence. The young musician was already, in spite of the disadvantages of his humble birth and the bad record of his father, a welcome guest of more than one rich house. With two of his well-to-do pupils, Jeannette Honrath and Maria van Westerhold, he fell deeply in love; the former, however, married the later Field-Marshal Greth, while Maria became the wife of Baron Friedrich von Elverfeldt.

Already Beethoven had become so outstanding a figure in the local musical life that it was felt he ought to try to establish himself, at any rate for a time, in one of the greater musical centres. He was known as a remarkable pianist, and his compositions, which as yet, of course, circulated only in manuscript, had convinced a good many thoughtful connoisseurs that he would prove to be the successor of Mozart, who had died in 1791.

Perhaps it was in large part through the good offices of Count Waldstein that Beethoven received permission from the Elector, in the autumn of 1792, to betake himself to Vienna for the purpose of further study under Haydn. His letters of the time show that he contemplated a return to Bonn sooner or later, but as events turned out he was never to see his native place again; Vienna remained his home for the rest of his days.

An indication of the esteem in which he was held is to be found in the inscription made by Waldstein in the album which, in accordance with the practice of the time, was presented to him, with suitable messages, by his intimate friends on his leaving Bonn: " Dear Beethoven! You are going to Vienna in fulfilment of your long-frustrated wishes. The Genius of Mozart is mourning and weeping over the death of her pupil. She found a refuge but no occupation with the inexhaustible Haydn; through him

she wishes to form a union with another. With the help of assiduous labour you shall receive *Mozart's spirit from Haydn's hands.* Your true friend, Waldstein. Bonn, October 29, 1792." [2]

Beethoven arrived in Vienna about the 11th November. At first he was supported by the Elector, and when the composer's father died, on the 18th December, the 100 thalers of the latter's pension was granted as salary to the son. But evil days were dawning for the Elector as for so many other German princes. The new French Republic was at war with the German State, and when the French armies crossed the Rhine in the autumn of 1794 the Elector and his Court took to flight. The ultimate arrangement come to as regards Beethoven seems to have been that he was granted indefinite leave of absence from Bonn, but without salary until he should be recalled.

He was now strong enough, however, to stand on his own feet. His fame had preceded him, his social recommendations were valuable, his patrons were influential, and this protégé of the Elector was bound to be well received by the latter's nephew, the Emperor of Austria. For a long time he lived in the same house as Prince Carl Lichnowsky, one of the numerous members of the Austrian aristocracy who were passionately interested in music.

Almost all these grandees maintained private musical establishments of one kind or another. Sometimes, as in the case of Haydn's patrons, the Esterhazys, it was a complete concert orchestra, together with soloists; in others, sufficient instrumentalists for the accompaniments to the Mass in the private chapel; in others, an ensemble of string or wind players for the "table music"; in others, a quartet or sextet that met regularly for practice. Vienna at that time was rich in music of all sorts, operatic, church, and instrumental; but it was the last-named that was rapidly coming to be regarded as the specific Viennese contribution to the history of the art, and it was destined to find its culmination in Beethoven, though the tradition was still carried on, more than half a century later, by Brahms and Bruckner.

[2] The translation of this and other contemporary documents in the present "Life" is that of Thayer.

Beethoven was in great demand as teacher, piano soloist, improviser, and composer; in 1796 and 1797 a number of his works appeared in print, including the song " Adelaide," the Three Trios (op. 1), the three early piano sonatas dedicated to Haydn, the quintet for strings (op. 4), the two 'cello sonatas (op. 5), and the E flat piano sonata (op. 7). The originality and audacity of his early works were a great attraction to music lovers of the time.

A countryman of ours, William Gardiner, made the acquaintance in Leicester, in 1793, of a manuscript trio in E flat (op. 3, not published till 1797); Gardiner himself played the viola part in it. " This composition," he afterwards wrote, " so different from anything I had ever heard, awakened in me a new sense, a new delight in the science of sounds. . . . When I went to town [London] I enquired for the works of this author, but could learn nothing more than that he was considered a madman and that his music was like himself." Elsewhere he speaks of this first experience of Beethoven's music as " a new sense to me, an intellectual pleasure which I had never received from sounds."

Beethoven was making a good income and living well, perhaps by way of reaction against the privations of his early years; at one time he permitted himself the luxuries of a horse and a personal servant. He still had, to some extent, his two younger brothers on his hands, but as they grew older they became more able to take care of themselves. In 1795 they both settled in Vienna. The elder of the two, Carl Caspar, had been trained in music, and was soon able to maintain himself fairly comfortably by teaching; the younger, Johann, had been apprenticed to the Bonn Court apothecary, and now became an assistant in an apothecary's shop in Vienna. He prospered as the years went on, and ultimately bought and carried on successfully a business of his own.

Beethoven at this time was a man of great bodily strength, illimitable ambition, vast self-esteem, and a strength of character that very often showed itself as immovable obstinacy. On his first settling in Vienna he took lessons from old Haydn, but the setting star and the rising one appear to have agreed none too well. Beethoven, though he realised the need for more technical study,

was already conscious of his gifts as a composer, and no doubt chafed at being pegged back by his master and kept at dry contrapuntal exercises. Haydn, for his part, was probably too much occupied just then to have much time to spare for close personal attention to this fiery young pupil who was always straining at the pedagogic leash.

In after-years Beethoven said that though he had had lessons from Haydn he had learned nothing from him; and he seems to have worked with a greater will under his next master, Albrechtsberger; but it must have been difficult all along for him to live, as it were, a double musical life during these years, a pupil in private and a much-sought-after composer and piano virtuoso in public. From the opera composer Salieri he also took lessons, mostly in the art of writing for the voice.

His friend Ries wrote long afterwards concerning this period of Beethoven's life: "I knew them all well [i.e. his three masters]; all three valued Beethoven highly, but were also of one mind touching his habits of study. All of them said Beethoven was so headstrong and self-sufficient that he had to learn much through harsh experience which he had refused to accept when it was presented to him as a subject of study."

He made his first appearance in Vienna as composer and performer on the 29th March, 1795, when he played the solo part in his piano concerto in B flat; while on the 31st he played in a Mozart concerto (probably the D minor) after the first part of a performance of *La Clemenza di Tito* that had been got up by Mozart's widow. In February 1796 he went concertising in Prague and Berlin; it is probable that the King of Prussia, Frederick William II, offered him a Court appointment, which he refused.

During this period there was more than a touch of arrogance about him: the rough giant had not yet been tamed by misfortune and suffering. His manners were none of the best, and it was sometimes only by the exercise of the greatest tact that his friends, who admired and loved him, could avoid a quarrel. Prince Lichnowsky cheerfully submitted to having his domestic arrangements upset by the caprices of the erratic young composer, and even

went so far as to tell his servant that if Beethoven's bell and his own rang at the same time he was to attend to Beethoven first.

The huge explosive force of the young genius, bursting as he generally was with the pride of his own strength, could with difficulty be held in check by his will. He was careless of other people's feelings, yet exceedingly prone to take offence himself; but his repentance was usually as quick and as sincere as his anger. An undated letter he wrote about this time to his friend Wegeler is typical of his alternations between unreasoning rage and almost incoherent remorse:

"Dearest! Best! In what an odious light you have exhibited me to myself! I acknowledge it, I do not deserve your friendship. You are so noble, so considerate, and the first time that I arranged myself alongside of you I fell so far below you! . . . You think that I have lost some of my goodness of heart, but, thank heaven! it was no intentional or deliberate malice which induced me to act as I did towards you; it was my inexcusable thoughtlessness which did not permit me to see the matter in its true light. Oh, how ashamed I am, not only for your sake but also for my own. . . . Oh, let me say for myself, I was always good, and always strove to be upright and true in my actions — otherwise how could you have loved me? Could I have changed so fearfully for the worse in such a short time? Impossible; these feelings of goodness and love of righteousness cannot have died for ever in me in a moment. No, Wegeler, dearest, best, oh, venture again to throw yourself entirely into the arms of your Beethoven; trust in the good qualities you used to find in him; I will guarantee that the pure temple of sacred friendship which you erect shall remain firm for ever; no accident, no storm shall ever shake its foundations — firm — for ever — our friendship — pardon — oblivion — a new upflaming of the dying, sinking friendship — oh, Wegeler, do not reject this hand of reconciliation. Place yourself in mine — oh God! — but no more; I am coming to throw myself in your arms, to entreat you to restore to me my lost friend. And you will give yourself to me, your penitent, loving, never-forgetting Beethoven again."

He was nearing his thirtieth year, and was superbly conscious of his gifts and his growing importance; and it is interesting to speculate as to what would ultimately have become of him had the whole course of his outer life not been changed about that time by the oncoming of deafness. He would certainly have made virtuoso tours all over Europe; as he himself says in a later letter, but for his deafness he would have travelled over half the earth by now.

He found plentiful favour in Vienna, but also abundance of opposition; for Vienna was the southern German Mecca of musicians in those days, and new-comers of great ability were anything but welcome to the people who had already attained to vested interests there. Beethoven would be doubly unwelcome — as a stranger from the outside world, and as a performer and composer of exceptional talent.

As was the custom in those days, he often measured himself, in drawing-rooms, against this or that local or visiting pianist as performer and improviser; and the universal verdict was that though others might surpass him in grace and style, he had no equal for fire and power and the gift of moving the heart. But his manners towards his rivals and his audiences were hardly calculated to endear him to either.

A contemporary account in a musical journal (1799) shows him in rivalry with a young pianist, Joseph Wölffl, two years younger than himself, whose exquisite piano playing had won for him a large number of admirers, so that the town was divided between his partisans and those of Beethoven. The writer praises Wölffl's ease, precision, and clearness, and his graceful expression in adagios, while Beethoven bears the palm for brilliance and intellectual power. The article concludes thus: "That Wölffl likewise enjoys an advantage because of his amiable bearing, contrasted with the somewhat haughty pose of Beethoven, is very natural."

Ludwig, indeed, himself confesses that he had no use for certain people except so far as they could be of service to him. "I value them," he says in one of his letters, "only by what they can do

for me. . . . I look upon them only as instruments upon which I play when I feel so disposed." His self-esteem was a byword in the town: old Haydn's humorous way of asking after him was, " Well, how goes it with our Great Mogul? "

Beethoven was in great demand by the publishers, he was recognised as, in some respects, the greatest pianist of the day, and he felt a titanic force of creation within himself; so it is hardly to be wondered at if, judged by ordinary social standards, he lost his head occasionally. The most tolerant of all with him were his aristocratic patrons; probably it was easier for them to smile at his rudenesses, his gaucheries, and his fits of temper because, after all, the social gulf between him and them was too great ever to be completely bridged. It was people in the middle walk of life, and still more his colleagues and rivals, who found his arrogance and brusquerie most trying. He was, in fact, torn asunder by two opposing elements of his nature. On the one hand he took as his ideal a life of love and service to mankind; on the other he found himself forced by the very strength of his body and spirit, neither of which could tolerate even a hint of subjection, into exaggerated expressions of independence.

He anticipated Nietzsche's doctrine of the Will-to-Power: " The devil take you," he writes to one of his friends (Zmeskall), " I want none of your moral [precepts], for Power is the morality of men who loom above the others, and it is also mine." It must have been in some such mood as this that he made his famous answer to the lady who asked him if he went to hear Mozart's operas: " I do not know them," he said, " and I do not care to hear the music of others lest I forfeit some of my originality."

The painters and the sculptors have gone on idealising more and more, during the last hundred years, the portraits and busts of Beethoven; they show him not as he really was, but as they imagine the composer of the Ninth Symphony and the Mass in D and the last quartets *must* have been. His contemporaries did not see him like that, and especially the contemporaries of the first half of his life, before any of his supreme masterpieces had been written.

He was plain and pock-marked, while his manners never lost the roughness of his first upbringing. But plain as he was, he had, for a time, aspirations to be a buck; he had hardly settled in Vienna before he bought himself fashionable clothes and took lessons in dancing, though the attempt to become a dancer was soon given up. He was as susceptible to flattery as he was resentful of an injury, or a supposed injury; and unfortunately he more than once got into the hands of the wrong people who knew how to work upon his vanity. But with all his obvious failings he won the utmost devotion from the many friends who could not help seeing the fundamental bigness not only of the musician but of the man.

None of them had any doubt that out of this somewhat cubbish young fellow was to come the greatest composer of the new day; and Prince Lichnowsky's settlement upon him of an annuity of 600 florins until such time as he should obtain a worthy and profitable official post was typical of the length to which his admirers were prepared to go in order to give his genius every opportunity.

If ever there was sexless music in this world it is that of Beethoven; nowhere does it play upon the merely sensuous side of mankind, while at its best it soars into heights that are above and beyond sex, heights upon which only the spirit at its purest can breathe. But Beethoven himself, especially in his early manhood, was of a notably amorous nature.

His life-long friend Wegeler said of him: "The truth as I learned to know it, and also my brother-in-law Stephan von Breuning, Ferdinand Ries, and Bernhard Romberg, is that there was never a time when Beethoven was not in love, and that in the highest degree. . . . In Vienna, at all events so long as I lived there, Beethoven was always in love, and occasionally made a conquest which would have been very difficult if not impossible for many an Adonis."

During the period we are now considering he made a proposal of marriage to the beautiful Magdalena Willmann, a native of Bonn who had made a reputation as a singer and was at the time engaged at the Vienna Opera. Thayer, the biographer of Beetho-

ven, met, in 1860, a daughter of Magdalena's brother Max, who told him she had often heard her father speak of the affair. When Thayer asked her why her aunt had refused the composer, she burst out laughing and said, " Because he was so ugly, and half crazy! "

During these years he was writing a great deal of music of all genres, and a considerable portion of it was published. It is not always possible to determine precisely when a particular work of his was written, owing to his habit of dropping a work for a time and taking it up again, and also owing to the fact that the date of publication does not necessarily indicate the date of composition; but we know certainly that among the works of 1798–9 are the three trios for strings (op. 9), the five piano sonatas of op. 10 and op. 14, the Sonata Pathétique (op. 13), the three violin sonatas (op. 12), the first two piano concertos, the First Symphony (which was performed on the 2nd June, 1800), and a number of variations.

To the next year belong the ballet *The Men of Prometheus,* the six quartets of op. 18, the septet (op. 30), the B flat piano sonata (op. 22), the third (C minor) piano concerto, and the oratorio *The Mount of Olives;* and to 1801 the violin sonatas op. 23 and op. 24, the piano sonatas in A flat, E flat, C sharp minor, and D major (op. 26, op. 27, Nos. 1 and 2, and op. 28), the C major quintet (op. 29), and other works. The C sharp minor sonata is the one that afterwards became known as the " Moonlight," and quite a number of people believe to this day that it was meant as a sort of declaration of romantic love for Beethoven's pupil the Countess Giulietta Guicciardi. The truth is that the title of the " Moonlight " was not affixed to it till long after, and then not by Beethoven; that the work was prompted by the reading of a poem by Seume, in which a girl kneels at the altar and prays for her sick father; and that although the sonata is certainly dedicated to Giulietta it was not written for her. To Giulietta he had given a rondo, but as he afterwards wanted this for another person he begged it back from the former and gave her this sonata in exchange.

The whole course of Beethoven's outer life and his spiritual

development were changed by the deafness that, by the period to which we have now arrived, had already become of the greatest seriousness. Its inexorable progress made the career of a travelling virtuoso henceforth impossible; he was thrown back more and more upon composition as an outlet for his activity, and driven further and further inwards upon himself.

Neither the precise date nor the precise cause of the malady can now be determined. As to the latter, two legends may be disposed of at the commencement. One is that in 1796 Beethoven, coming indoors on a hot summer day, stripped to the skin and stood by an open window to cool himself, thus bringing on a dangerous illness that ended in deafness. The other came from Charles Neate the English pianist, to whom Beethoven told, in 1815, a strange story of how a tenor had given him a great deal of trouble over an opera aria, which had had to be re-written three times to suit him. Just when Beethoven was congratulating himself on having got rid of him, the tenor returned. Beethoven sprang up in a rage and threw himself at full length on the floor: when he arose he found he was deaf. There can be no question of Neate's *bona fides;* so we are simply left wondering at Beethoven's motives in telling him so fantastic a story.

The trouble seems to have begun about 1799. The first symptoms he seems to have disregarded; but in a year or so he had become thoroughly alarmed at his condition, and by 1801 he had to give up the idea of touring as a pianist. For as long as he could he concealed his misfortune from everyone, even his closest friends, partly out of sensitiveness, partly because he was afraid his Vienna enemies and rivals would use the knowledge to his detriment.

We have the first full account of the matter from his own hand in a letter of 29th June, 1801, to his friend Wegeler. Worldly matters, he says, are going well with him; Lichnowsky has settled on him the annuity we have already mentioned; " besides I have six or seven publishers, and might have more if I chose; they no longer bargain with me — I ask, and they pay."

But his " evil demon," his " bad health," is continually putting

a spoke in his wheel. For three years his hearing has steadily been getting worse, for which he blames his "wretched bowels." (All his life he suffered from a sort of dysentery.) He has tried various doctors, some of them moderately sensible, others, in his opinion, asses; under the latest of them the dysentery has improved, but he still suffers from a continuous whistling and buzzing in the ears, day and night. "I can say I am living a wretched life; for two years I have avoided almost all social gatherings because it is impossible for me to say to people: 'I am deaf.' If I belonged to any other profession it would be easier, but in my profession it is an awful state, the more since my enemies, who are not few, what would they say?"

At the theatre he has to sit near the stage to hear the actors; at a little distance the high tones of instruments and singers escape him, and at a further distance he does not hear at all. He can hear the sounds of a conversation in low tones, but not the words; and when people shout it is intolerable. His friends, who do not know his real condition, put it down to absent-mindedness. "I have often cursed my existence: Plutarch taught me resignation. If possible I will bid defiance to my fate, although there will be moments in my life when I shall be the unhappiest of God's creatures." Wegeler is not to mention the secret to anyone, not even to his wife (Eleanore von Breuning).

In 1802, walking in the country with his pupil Ries, the latter drew his attention to a shepherd who was piping on a home-made flute: Beethoven could hear nothing, and became silent and morose.

He spent the summer of this year at Heiligenstadt, a village close to Vienna, where he could be at once in the country and within easy reach of Vienna and his physician. For a time his courage seems to have failed him, and he penned an extraordinary document that is known as the Heiligenstadt Testament. It was addressed to his brothers, but was never sent to them, though it is evident from the condition of the manuscript that he had made a fair copy with the greatest care: it was found in a bundle of papers bought, after his death, by the publisher Artaria. A curious

and inexplicable feature of the document is that nowhere does he mention his brother Johann by name. The Testament must be given in full:

" For my brothers Carl and Beethoven.

" O ye men who think or say that I am malevolent, stubborn or misanthropic, how greatly do ye wrong me, you do not know the secret causes of my seeming, from childhood my heart and mind were disposed to the gentle feeling of good will, I was even eager to accomplish great deeds, but reflect now that for 6 years I have been in a hopeless case, aggravated by senseless physicians, cheated year after year in the hope of improvement, finally compelled to face the prospect of a *lasting malady* (whose cure will take years or, perhaps, be impossible), born with an ardent and lively temperament, even susceptible to the diversions of society, I was compelled early to isolate myself, to live in loneliness, when I at times tried to forget all this, O how harshly was I repulsed by the doubly sad experience of my bad hearing, and yet it was impossible for me to say to men speak louder, shout, for I am deaf.

" Ah how could I possibly admit an infirmity in the *one sense* which should have been more perfect in me than in others, a sense which I once possessed in highest perfection, a perfection such as few surely in my profession enjoy or ever have enjoyed — O I cannot do it, therefore forgive me when you see me draw back when I would gladly mingle with you, my misfortune is doubly painful because it must lead to my being misunderstood, for me there can be no recreation in society of my fellows, refined intercourse, mutual exchange of thought, only just as little as the greatest needs command may I mix with society, I must live like an exile, if I approach near to people a hot terror seizes upon me, a fear that I may be subjected to the danger of letting my condition be observed — thus it has been during the last half year which I spent in the country, commanded by my intelligent physician to spare my hearing as much as possible, in this almost meeting my present natural disposition, although I sometimes ran counter to it yielding to my inclination for society, but what a

humiliation when one stood beside me and heard a flute in the distance and *I heard nothing* or someone heard *the shepherd singing* and again I heard nothing, such incidents brought me to the verge of despair, but little more and I would have put an end to my life — only art it was that withheld me, ah, it seemed impossible to leave the world until I had produced all that I felt called upon to produce, and so I endured this wretched existence — truly wretched, an excitable body which a sudden change can throw from the best into the worst state — Patience — it is said I must now choose for my guide, I have done so, I hope my determination will remain firm to endure until it pleases the inexorable parcae to break the thread, perhaps I shall get better, perhaps not, I am prepared.

" Forced already in my 28th year to become a philosopher, O it is not easy, less easy for the artist than for anyone else — Divine One thou lookest into my inmost soul, thou knowest it, thou knowest that love of man and desire to do good live therein. O men, when some day you read these words, reflect that ye did me wrong and let the unfortunate one comfort himself and find one of his kind who despite all obstacles of nature yet did all that was in his power to be accepted among worthy artists and men.

" You my brothers Carl and as soon as I am dead if Dr. Schmid is still alive ask him in my name to describe my malady and attach this document to the history of my illness so that so far as is possible at least the world may become reconciled with me after my death. At the same time I declare you two to be the heirs of my small fortune (if so it can be called), divide it fairly, bear with and help each other, what injury you have done me you know was long ago forgiven.

" To you, brother Carl, I give special thanks for the attachment you have displayed towards me of late. It is my wish that your lives may be better and freer from care than I have had, recommend *virtue* to your children, it alone can give happiness, not money, I speak from experience, it was virtue that upheld me in misery, to it next to my art I owe the fact that I did not end my life by suicide — Farewell and love each other — I thank

all my friends, particularly *Prince Lichnowsky* and *Professor Schmid* — I desire that the instruments from Prince L. be preserved by one of you but let no quarrel result from this, so soon as they can serve you a better purpose sell them, how glad will I be if I can still be helpful to you in my grave — with joy I hasten towards death — if it comes before I shall have had an opportunity to show all my artistic capacities it will still come too early for me despite my hard fate and I shall probably wish that it had come later — but even then I am satisfied, will it not free me from a state of endless suffering? Come when thou wilt I shall meet thee bravely — Farewell and do not wholly forget me when I am dead, I deserve this of you in having often in life thought of you how to make you happy, be so ——

" Ludwig van Beethoven.
(Seal.)

" Heiglnstadt (*sic*),
October 6th,
1802.

" For my brothers Carl and to be read and executed after my death.

" Heiglnstadt, October 10th, 1802, thus do I take my farewell of thee — and indeed sadly — yes that beloved hope — which I brought with me when I came here to be cured at least in a degree — I must wholly abandon, as the leaves of autumn fall and are withered so hope has been blighted, almost as I came — I go away — even the high courage — which often inspired me in the beautiful days of summer — has disappeared — O Providence — grant me at last but one day of pure *joy* — it is so long since real joy echoed in my heart — O when — O when, O Divine One — shall I feel it again in the temple of nature and of men — Never? — no — O that would be too hard."

But the fit of despair seems to have been of short duration; Plutarch perhaps helped him to win the mastery over himself and to refrain, at the last moment, from sending the document to his

brothers. That his strong spirit could not have dallied long with these moods of self-pity is shown by the list of remarkable works he wrote or completed in 1802: it includes the second symphony, the three violin sonatas of op. 30, the first of the piano sonatas numbered op. 31, the sets of Variations, op. 34 and 35, and the Bagatelles, op. 33. He also saw a number of works through the press.

It was known that Beethoven possessed certain bank shares in his last years. After his death the certificates for these were looked for everywhere in vain, until one of his associates and confidants, Holz, told the searchers of a secret drawer in Beethoven's desk. There they found not only the certificates but some letters. One of these has caused more speculation than anything else in connection with him. The document consists of a letter with two postscripts, written in lead pencil on two pieces of notepaper. They are here quoted in full:

"*July 6, in the morning.*

"My angel, my all, my very self — only a few words to-day and at that with pencil (with yours) — not till to-morrow will my lodgings be definitely determined upon — what a useless waste of time. Why this deep sorrow where necessity speaks — can our love endure except through sacrifices — except through not demanding everything — can you change it that you are not wholly mine, I not wholly thine. Oh, God! look out into the beauties of nature and comfort yourself with that which must be — love demands everything and that very justly — *thus it is with me so far as you are concerned, and you with me.* If we were wholly united you would feel the pain of it as little as I.

"My journey was a fearful one; I did not reach here until 4 o'clock yesterday morning; lacking horses the post-coach chose another route — but what an awful one. At the stage before the last I was warned not to travel at night — made fearful of a forest, but that only made me the more eager and I was wrong; the coach must needs break down on the wretched road, a bottomless mud road — without such postilions as I had with me I should

have stuck in the road. Esterhazy, travelling the usual road hitherward, had the same fate with eight horses that I had with four — yet I got some pleasure out of it, as I always do when I successfully overcome difficulties.

"Now a quick change to things internal from things external! We shall soon surely see each other; moreover, I cannot communicate to you the observations I have made during the last few days touching my own life — if our hearts were always close together I would make none of the kind. My heart is full of many things to say to you — Ah! — there are moments when I feel that speech is nothing after all — cheer up — remain my true, my only treasure, my all as I am yours; the gods must send us the rest that which shall be the best for us.

"Your faithful LUDWIG.

"*Evening, Monday, July* 6.

"You are suffering, my dearest creature — only now have I learned that letters must be posted very early in the morning. Mondays, Thursdays, — the only days on which the mail-coach goes from here to K. You are suffering — Ah, wherever I am there you are also. I shall arrange affairs between us so that I shall live and live with you, what a life!!!! thus!!!! thus without you — pursued by the goodness of mankind hither and thither — which I as little try to deserve as I deserve it.

"Humility of man towards man — it pains me — and when I consider myself in connection with the universe, what am I and what is he whom we call the greatest — and yet — herein lies the divine in man. I weep when I reflect that you will probably not receive the first intelligence from me until Saturday — much as you love me, I love you more — but do not ever conceal your thoughts from me — good-night — as I am taking the baths I must go to bed. Oh, God! so near, so far! Is our love not truly a celestial edifice — firm as Heaven's vault.

"*Good-morning, on July* 7.

"Though still in bed my thoughts go out to you, my Immortal

Beloved, now and then joyfully, then sadly, waiting to learn whether or not fate will hear us. I can live only wholly with you or not at all — yes, I am resolved to wander so long away from you until I can fly to your arms and say that I am really at home, send my soul enwrapped in you into the land of spirits. — Yes, unhappily it must be so — you will be the more resolved since you know my fidelity — to you, no one can ever again possess my heart — none — never — Oh God, why is it necessary to part from one whom one so loves and yet my life in W [Vienna] is now a wretched life — your love makes me at once the happiest and the unhappiest of men — at my age I need a steady, quiet life — can that be under our conditions?

" My angel, I have just been told that the mail-coach goes every day — and I must close at once so that you may receive the L. at once. Be calm, only by a calm consideration of our existence can we achieve our purpose to live together — be calm, — love me — to-day — yesterday — what tearful longings for you — you — you — my life — my all — farewell — Oh continue to love me — never misjudge the most faithful heart of your beloved L.

ever thine
ever mine
ever for each other."

As will be seen, the letter bears no definite date and no indication of place; and the unravelling of the mystery has exercised the wits of numberless investigators. The " Immortal Beloved " is held by some to have been the Countess Giulietta Guicciardi, with whom Beethoven was undoubtedly in love when she was his pupil (in 1801), at which time she would be about the age of seventeen. In November 1801 he writes to Wegeler of his lonely and sad life for the last two years, by reason of his bad hearing, but says that now a change has been wrought " by a dear, fascinating girl who loves me and whom I love." For the first time he feels that marriage might bring him happiness, but " alas, she is not of my station — and now — it would be impossible for me to marry."

This girl was almost undoubtedly Giulietta. It is unlikely that her family would have countenanced the marriage in any case; and in 1803 she married a Count Gallenberg. Beethoven referred to the affair nearly twenty years later, in a conversation with his friend Schindler, who had called on Gallenberg in connection with the score of *Fidelio:* " I was much loved by her, — more than ever her husband was. . . . She was born Guicciardi. She married him before he went to Italy. When she came to Vienna she sought me out in tears, but I scorned her."

It was natural to assume that this must have been the lady to whom the " Immortal Beloved " letter was written, but the evidence is now generally recognised to be against the theory. Other names that have been suggested are those of Therese Malfatti, who in 1806 or 1807 (the probable date of the letter) would be a girl of only thirteen or fourteen, Amalie Sebald, and the Countess Therese von Brunswick, a young cousin of Giulietta. The sole clue to the year is that afforded by the " Monday, July 6." The only years in which July 6th was a Monday were 1795, 1801, 1807, and 1812; and for various reasons none of these years can come into the question except 1807. Thayer, however, believes that Beethoven, as was not unusual with him, made a mistake of a day in the heading of the postscript, and decides that the year was 1806, in the summer of which year the composer was in Hungary, and that the " Immortal Beloved " was Therese von Brunswick, the daughter of a Hungarian nobleman. After the problem has been looked at from every possible angle, Thayer's solution of it remains the most credible.

In 1803 Beethoven left behind him his period of brilliant apprenticeship and showed himself a master. Remarkable as the second symphony was, it was far outdistanced by the third (the Eroica) that was written in 1803, a year that saw also the production of the Kreutzer violin sonata and other works.

The oratorio *The Mount of Olives* was given on the 5th April, 1803, at a concert the programme of which included also the first and second symphonies and the C minor piano concerto; audiences of that day thought nothing of monster programmes of this kind,

though they generally tired towards the end of the concerts. Beethoven's popularity was so great that he could charge double prices for some seats, triple for others, and quadruple for the boxes: his profits amounted to 1,800 florins. George Thomson, of Edinburgh, the collector of Scots folk-melodies, entered into negotiations with Beethoven for the composition of six sonatas on Scots airs, but the composer's demand of 300 ducats was twice what Thomson was prepared to pay. Some years later Beethoven made arrangements for Thomson of various Scots and other songs.

In this same year Beethoven took to live with him his brother Carl, who proved very useful as a negotiator and secretary in the many dealings with publishers. Carl was rather a pompous ass, but the absurd self-importance that breathes through some of his letters to publishers may be partly accounted for by his sense of his brother's high standing in the musical world. Carl, by the way, married, on the 25th May, 1806, Theresia Reiss, the daughter of a well-to-do upholsterer; on the following 4th September there was born to the couple that son — another Carl — who was to be so grievous a trouble to the composer in his last years.

The year 1805 saw the production in Vienna (on the 20th November) of Beethoven's solitary opera *Fidelio,* the success of which was more than dubious; it was badly rehearsed, and some of the singers were inefficient. The work ran to only three performances.

It has been said that Beethoven's disgust at this reception of his opera made him resolve never to touch the genre again, but this is not true. He was continually searching, in the next few years, for a suitable text; he coquetted for a time with a *Macbeth,* and would have taken up Goethe's *Faust* had he been able to find someone who could make a good libretto out of it. At various times in later years he composed three overtures for *Fidelio* in addition to the one that was played at the first performance. The comparative failure of *Fidelio* was due mainly to the city's having been emptied of a number of the more well-to-do families because of the swift advance of the French upon it; it was entered by the enemy on the 13th November.

In the autumn of 1806 Beethoven suggested to the new management of the Court Theatre that he should be engaged, at a fixed salary of 2,400 florin per annum plus certain gross receipts, to supply at least one opera and an operetta each year. The offer was not accepted; Beethoven's deafness must have been felt to be too great a disability in an opera-house. To soften the blow of the refusal, one of the directors, Prince Esterhazy, commissioned from him the Mass in C, which was given at the Prince's house, Eisenstadt, on the name-day of the Princess, 13th September.

In the main, the record of the years 1806, 1807, and 1808, like that of their immediate predecessors, is one of incessant creation; among the works of this period are the fourth, fifth, and sixth symphonies, the Rasoumovsky quartets, the *Coriolan* overture, the fourth piano concerto, the 'cello sonata (op. 69), the two trios of op. 70, and the Choral Fantasia. Count Rasoumovsky, the Russian Ambassador at Vienna, was a man of great wealth and decided musical gifts. Into the quartets that he commissioned of Beethoven the composer introduced a couple of Russian folk-tunes. The Count formed a first-rate quartet ensemble for practice in his palace: the great Schuppanzigh was the first violin, the Count himself the second, Weiss the viola, and Linke the 'cello.

By this time Beethoven had become less sensitive about his deafness, which could no longer be concealed from the world, but his bad temper and his arrogance showed no signs of improvement. In 1808 he quarrelled with his brother Johann, the apothecary, because the latter dared to ask him for money he had lent him.

Johann wanted to buy a house and shop in Linz, the purchase-money for which he had difficulty in scraping together. Beethoven took offence and swore he would never write to his brother again. As usual, it was utterly impossible for him to believe that when a difference of opinion arose anyone could be in the right but himself. Johann, by the way, did very well out of his shop the next year, when he secured a contract for the supply of medicines to the French army that was in the neighbourhood.

One of the tasks of recent biographers of Beethoven has been to clear a number of people of the aspersions cast upon them by

the composer. The earlier tendency was to assume sympathetically that he was always right and the others always wrong; but a sober study of the documents proves that in most cases it was Beethoven who was in the wrong. His combination of almost complete ignorance of the world, bad health, quick temper, touchiness, and suspicion made it inevitable that he should again and again take offence where none was intended, and give wounds that it sometimes took years to heal.

His pupil Czerny, in later years, energetically combated the legend that had got about that Vienna had behaved badly to Beethoven. The truth is, say Czerny, that even as a youth he had received extraordinary consideration and respect from the highest aristocracy there. "Later, too, when he estranged many by his hypochondria, nothing was charged against his often very striking peculiarities; hence his predilection for Vienna, and it is doubtful if he would have been left so undisturbed in any other country. It is true that as an artist he had to fight cabals, but the public was innocent in this. He was always marvelled at and respected as an extraordinary being, and his greatness was suspected even by those who did not understand him."

He was indeed difficult to get on with, and his deafness and self-absorption made him particularly difficult in practical matters, especially conducting. In 1808 he had somehow or other so angered the orchestra that the men, while willing enough to play his works, would do so only on condition that he should not be present at rehearsals. He could not hear everything distinctly, and when he was conducting he was so lost in his dreams that he could not be trusted to count correctly, or to give proper leads.

It was shortly after the affair just mentioned that the orchestra broke down under him during a concert performance of the Choral Fantasia: Beethoven stopped them and compelled them to begin again. The men naturally felt humiliated and resentful; but Beethoven had the grace afterwards to admit that his own absence of mind was the cause of the disaster, and to apologise to the orchestra. Yet in spite of his glaring faults of character and temper there was a something about him that endeared him to his

friends. Ries tells us that he was a thoroughly good and kind man, the victim of his own whims and impulsiveness; his anger with anyone would vanish as soon as he found they were in trouble, and he was always ready to assist any charitable undertaking, of which there were necessarily many during the war. When he was in a good humour people found him irresistible.

It has been remarked that while he poured out work after work in the decade from 1800 to 1810, from 1810 to 1819 his output was, for him, curiously small. It is true that during this period he was much engaged in proof-reading and in business correspondence concerning his music, but not notably more so than in the earlier years. There may possibly have been a little physical and intellectual fatigue after the great exertions of the previous decade; but his comparative inactivity between 1810 and 1819 was no doubt due largely to his mind being preoccupied with other things than music, and especially love and finance.

In 1810 we find him becoming very particular about his clothes and his appearance once more: he seems to have proposed marriage — it is thought to Therese Malfatti, now of the age of about seventeen — and to have been considerably depressed by a refusal. A little while later he is seen taking great pleasure in the company of Marie Bigot, Amalie von Sebald, and other ladies; and some investigators hold that the " Immortal Beloved " letter really belongs to 1812, the object of his passion then being that Therese von Brunswick of whom mention has already been made.

It was in 1810 that he met one of the most extraordinary young women of the day, who, like most of the other women in Beethoven's life-story, has been the cause of much research, still more speculation, and yet more diversity of opinion. This was Elizabeth (Bettina) Brentano, the young sister of his friend Clemens Brentano; she is generally referred to, however, by her married name of von Arnim.

She was a young person of considerable intelligence and great literary skill, who exercised a curious fascination upon Goethe, with whom she was corresponding at this time. She made Beethoven's acquaintance in the spring of 1810. By her own account he took

to her so promptly as to have long talks with her in which he expressed himself with a fluency and at a length that must have been uncommon with him. She has been roundly accused of inventing these conversations; but the probability is that in her letters to Goethe she merely gave the dressing of her own vivacious style to Beethoven's remarks. He certainly could never have talked as she makes him talk; but he as certainly can be conceived as giving utterance to the ideas that form the basis of her dashing literary performances.

In 1839, twelve years after his death, there were printed in a German journal "Three Letters from Beethoven to Bettina." Over these a stormy controversy has raged. Their genuineness has been denied, asserted, re-denied, and re-asserted *ad infinitum;* but the general opinion is now that the second at least — of which the autograph is in existence — is genuine, while the other two may have been flights of fancy on Bettina's part, based, perhaps, on actual conversations with the composer. Whatever be the truth of the matter, there can be no question of the great interest that Beethoven, like many other eminent men of the day, felt in this remarkable young woman.

It was while Beethoven was taking a "cure" at Teplitz in 1812 that he and Goethe were able to gratify their long-standing wish to meet each other. The poet wrote to his wife, after their first meeting: "A more self-contained, energetic, sincere artist, I never saw: I can understand right well how singular must be his attitude to the world." In a later communication to his friend Zelter he says: "His talent amazed me; unfortunately he is an utterly untamed personality, and altogether in the wrong in holding the world to be detestable, but who does not make it any the more enjoyable for himself or others by his attitude."

During the visit to Teplitz there occurred the famous scene that has so often been described. Teplitz was full of notabilities that season. One day after Beethoven had been boasting to Goethe of his high-handed dealings with monarchs and princes they met the whole Court, including the Empress of Austria and the various Archdukes. Beethoven said to the poet, "Keep hold of my arm;

let them make room for us, not we for them." Goethe refused; he stood on one side, and complied with the etiquette of the day by standing with his hat off till the Empress had passed. Beethoven walked through the party with his arms folded and his hat " only slightly tilted." The Archdukes, who had more native good breeding than he had, and considerably more *savoir faire,* merely smiled pleasantly and made way for the licensed eccentric.

The incident has been rather strangely supposed to illustrate Beethoven's contempt for rank. On the contrary, his frequent rudeness to rank was a sign of how much, in reality, it counted with him. At an early stage of his career he had been greatly angered by being put at another dining-table than that of the highest ranks of the company; but his anger was soon appeased when room was made for him at this very table. It never seemed to occur to him that his deliberate rudeness to certain highly placed people, such as the Archduke Rudolph, who became his pupil, was made possible and safe for him only by a breeding and good humour and kindly tolerance on their part that were lacking on his.

Towards the end of 1808 he was offered the post of Kapellmeister by Napoleon's younger brother Jerome, who had been made King of Westphalia. The salary was 600 gold ducats; the duties were light, and Beethoven was disposed to accept the offer. When this became known in Vienna it was felt that it would be discreditable to lose him merely because the city could not offer him a permanent official post. Accordingly three of his chief patrons, the Archduke Rudolph, Prince Lobkowitz, and Prince Ferdinand Kinsky, undertook to provide him with a yearly sum of 4,000 florins until he should receive an appointment of the same value; should no such appointment be received, or should Beethoven be incapacitated by old age or accident, the annuity was to be for life.

The Archduke's share of the guarantee was 1,500 florins, Lobkowitz's 700, Kinsky's 1,800. In return Beethoven pledged himself to make his domicile in Vienna or some other Austrian city, and not to leave it except " for such times as may be called for by his

business or the business or the interests of art, touching which, however, the high contributors must be consulted, and to which they must give their assent." The agreement was dated 26th February, 1809.

Beethoven, during the negotiations, had shown himself anxious to be appointed to a Kapellmeistership at the Austrian Court, and it was understood that if at any time he should receive such an appointment he should forgo as much of his claim on the 4,000 florins as his salary would amount to. It must have been evident to everyone but himself that with his deafness and his faults of temper and manner it was out of the question that he should be given a position of authority in any opera-house; Jerome's desire to have him at Cassel was merely the desire to have the acknowledged greatest of living musicians to ornament his Court. He would hardly have been of much practical use.

When it was understood that he was not going to accept the Cassel appointment, it was offered to his pupil Ries at a smaller salary. Ries sought Beethoven out to find out if he had really refused the offer, and to ask his advice; but when, with great difficulty and after a delay of some weeks — during which even his letters on the matter were not answered — he at last found Beethoven, the latter simply said, in a cutting tone, "So — do you think that you can fill a position that was offered to me?" He was cold and haughty.

The next morning, when Ries called for an explanation, he was told by the servant that his master was not at home, though Ries could hear him playing in the next room. Ries took the servant by the throat and hurled him aside, and forced Beethoven to listen to him. After he had explained the situation, Beethoven simply said, "I did not understand that it was like that; I was told you were trying to get the appointment behind my back." Ries assured him that he had not yet even replied to the invitation, and then Beethoven volunteered to put things right. It was now too late, however; the appointment had been given to someone else.

In May 1809 the French armies were approaching Vienna (the city surrendered on the 12th), and Beethoven's pupil and patron

the Archduke Rudolph left Vienna with his mother the Empress; Beethoven's grief at parting from him found expression in the first movement (" Farewell ") of the sonata " Les Adieux, l'Absence, et le Retour " (op. 81a); the " return " of the Archduke took place on the 30th January, 1810.

One economic result of the war was a forced loan on all rentals, that penalised Beethoven in common with other householders. Another was that in 1811 the Austrian Government had to issue a " Finance Patent " reducing money values to one fifth.

It used to be thought that Beethoven's annuity was thus automatically reduced from 4,000 florins to 800; but seemingly under the scale that was established it was reduced only to 1,612 $\frac{9}{10}$ florins. His patrons, being honourable men, would willingly have made up the difference. Rudolph did so; but Kinsky first of all fell into arrears with his payments, and then, in November 1812, was thrown from his horse and killed. Beethoven's claim against his estate for the full original annuity could not, of course, be admitted by the executors till a court of law had sanctioned it; so that, with one thing and another, he received nothing at all under the Kinsky part of the agreement from 3rd November, 1812, to 31st March, 1815. Lobkowitz had almost ruined himself in theatrical management, and from him nothing was received from September 1811 until April 1815. Beethoven flew into his usual temper, and, forgetting past benefits, spoke of his unfortunate patron as " that rascal Lobkowitz."

An act of Beethoven's in the autumn of 1812 was destined to have dire consequences for himself in the future. One of his curious little weaknesses was his passion for interfering in the private lives of his brothers. Johann, the apothecary, was at this time a man of thirty-five years, and no doubt thought himself fully competent to look after himself in the ordinary affairs of life. Ludwig thought differently.

Johann's new house in Linz being too large for him, he rented part of it to a physician from Vienna, who brought with him his wife's sister, Therese Obermayer, by all accounts a more than ordinarily attractive woman. In Johann's case the attraction was

so strong that from being his housekeeper, as she was at first, she became his unmarried wife.

Most people would have said that this was nobody's affair but his own. When Ludwig heard of it, however, he descended upon Linz and on Johann, and with an air of authority demanded that the liaison should end. Johann naturally resented this officious interference on the part of his musical brother from Vienna. His opposition only developed Ludwig's natural obstinacy. He first saw the local Bishop about it, then the civil authorities, and actually obtained an order to the police to remove the girl to Vienna by a certain date if she should not have left Linz of her own accord by then. A quarrel ensued between the brothers, and the result of it all was that Johann, to keep the girl with whom he was in love, married her on the 8th November. There was nothing for it but for the defeated Ludwig to return to his camp in mortification. When the marriage turned out unhappily, as it did in later years, Johann was able to hurl at his brother the reproach that it was all his work.

Untaught by this lesson not to interfere with the private affairs of his relations, Ludwig was to bring further trouble upon himself in the years to come by his attitude towards the wife of his other brother, Carl. This latter, by the way, thought he was dying of consumption in the spring of 1813, and made a written "declaration" asking the court to appoint Ludwig guardian of his son. Carl recovered, however, perhaps as a result of an improvement that took place about that time in the state of his finances; for he too, being a Government official, had suffered by the war.

In 1813, and at intervals for some years afterwards, Beethoven thought seriously of going to England, where he was highly thought of, in quest of further fame and, what was still more important, money. On the 21st June, 1813, Wellington won the battle of Vittoria, and a certain Maelzel thought he ought to turn this resounding event to profit.

Maelzel, whose name is now remembered chiefly in connection with his metronome, was a clever inventor. He had recently

produced a " Panharmonicon," a sort of military orchestra worked by a bellows, the general principle of the thing being that of the barrel-organ — i.e. a revolving cylinder with pins. On this instrument various works were played, to the great delight of the simpler members of the public.

Maelzel wanted something from the greatest composer of the day, and persuaded Beethoven to write for the Panharmonicon a descriptive piece entitled *Wellington's Victory,* now more generally known as *The Battle of Vittoria;* it was to have *Rule, Brittania* and *God Save the King* in it. Maelzel soon saw the commercial possibilities of the overture, and, with his eye ultimately on London, got Beethoven to arrange it for the orchestra, in which form it was a huge success in Vienna. In the course of the next few months *The Battle of Vittoria* was the cause of a quarrel with Maelzel, whom Beethoven was imprudent enough to sue; the matter ended, a few years later, in each of them agreeing to pay half the expenses incurred by Beethoven's action. The project for a visit to London with Maelzel naturally fell through.

In February 1815 Sir George Smart gave *The Mount of Olives* in London, following it up with *The Battle of Vittoria,* which became so popular that Smart netted £1,000 out of it. The final result of some correspondence between Beethoven and his English friends was that the Philharmonic Society ordered from him three concert overtures, for which he was paid 75 guineas. Instead of sending them, however, three new works, as they had expected, he sent them three old ones, *King Stephen, The Ruins of Athens,* and the *Namensfeier* (written for the name-day of the Emperor). These were, for him, inferior works, and as they would have made a poor impression on audiences that had learned to admire the Fifth Symphony, it was impossible to perform them, and the Society naturally felt somewhat aggrieved at Beethoven's conduct.

His dealings with England as a whole, indeed, though financially profitable to him, hardly add to one's respect for him as a man. In the spring of 1816 he had arranged with the London publisher Birchall for the sale of the English rights of publication of the trio in B flat, the G major violin sonata, and the piano arrange-

ments of *The Battle of Vittoria* and the Seventh Symphony, for the sum of £65. Before he would sign the agreement on these lines that had been forwarded to him, Beethoven sprang on Birchall a demand for an additional £5 — £2 10*s*. extra for the trio, £1 10*s*. for copying, and £1 for postage. Birchall sent the £5, but the incident got Beethoven in bad odour in the London publishing world. When Neate went round trying to sell on Beethoven's behalf the three overtures, he was everywhere cold-shouldered; Birchall's blunt answer to him was, "If you gave me them for nothing I would not print them."

In the summer of 1817 the Philharmonic Society approached him again through his old pupil Ries, who was then living in London. The Society offered him 300 guineas (100 in advance for travelling expenses) to go to London the next winter with two new symphonies. Beethoven demanded an *extra* 100 guineas for travelling expenses, and payment of 150 guineas at once. The Society refused his terms and repeated its own, which he accepted; but instead of getting on with the expected Ninth and Tenth Symphonies, he settled down to the composition of the big B flat piano sonata (op. 106).

He was always pleading poverty at this time, but was probably not so poor as he made out. Matters with the Kinsky executors were settled in March 1815 by the payment to him of 2,479 florins and the arrangement of an annuity on new terms; from then to the end of his life he received 1,500 florins per annum from the Archduke, 1,200 from the Kinsky estate, and 700 from that of Lobkowitz. The latter's revenues were now out of his control; in twenty years or so he had dissipated an enormous fortune in the patronage of art. "Although," he wrote generously in 1814 to the Archduke, "I have reason to be anything but satisfied with Beethoven's behaviour towards me, nevertheless . . . I am rejoiced that his truly great works are beginning to be appreciated." He died in December 1816, in his forty-third year. Another generous friend, Prince Carl Lichnowsky, had died in April 1814.

Beethoven's anxiety about money during these and the later

years was the result in large part of the new responsibilities that had fallen upon him in connection with his nephew Carl. The latter's father had died on the 16th December, 1815: the cause of death was consumption, but Beethoven, with his usual suspicion of people he did not like — and he probably never disliked anyone so much as he did his brother's widow — thought he had been poisoned and insisted on a post-mortem!

The elder Carl, by his will made two days before his death, appointed Ludwig guardian of his son; but he added a codicil to the effect that as he had learned that Beethoven proposed to take the boy entirely away from his mother and bring him up himself, " and inasmuch as the best of harmony does not exist between my brother and my wife," his wish was that the boy should not be taken away from his mother but remain with her as long as " his future career " permitted, the guardianship, therefore, to be a joint one; " wherefore," he ended up, " for the welfare of my child, I recommend *compliance* to my wife and more *moderation* to my brother. God permit them to be harmonious for the sake of my child's welfare! This is the last wish of the dying husband and brother."

One of the most unfortunate of Beethoven's little weaknesses was his passion for adopting a high moral tone towards other people. *They* were invariably in the wrong, while he, on his own admission, was a model of uprightness; in his differences with the London people, for instance, in which the faults, as posterity is bound to recognise, were all on his side, they were all rogues and liars, while his own conduct seemed to him impeccable.

The fact that the widow Beethoven was known to be not exactly a model of chastity was enough to justify him, in his own eyes, in ousting her from the half-share in the guardianship of her child that the father had so earnestly desired. Within a few days of his brother's death he applied to the courts for the full guardianship — alleging the widow's immorality — and succeeded in January in obtaining the necessary order. The boy was then nine years old.

Beethoven at first sent him to the school of one Giannatasio del Rio, in Vienna, then to a parish priest in Mödling, hard by, and then took him into his own house. He placed every possible obstacle in the way of the mother's seeing her son, and did all he could to prejudice the child against her — even encouraged him to speak ill of her; his conduct in this respect led to the parish priest's dismissing the boy as an undesirable associate for the other children at the school. In August the widow moved the court to give her authority to care for the child and attend to his up-bringing; after several hearings her appeal was rejected in October. In December, however, Carl ran away from his uncle to his mother, and the whole affair came into court once more.

No one can doubt Beethoven's perfect honesty in the matter from his own point of view. He had a high ideal of his duty towards his dead brother and towards the young life that had been partially entrusted to him. But neither can there be the slightest doubt that he, a bachelor and by temperament a solitary, was hopelessly unfitted, by nature and by circumstances, for the sole care of a child. He was incapable of regulating his own domestic affairs; his quarrels with his landlords and servants were notorious. His way with the boy alternated between infinite tenderness and a severity that sometimes approached brutality. It was said that Carl's food was not all that a child of that age needed, and that his person and his linen were neglected. The ageing musician, almost quite deaf, morose, quarrelsome, and self-absorbed, was hardly all that a spirited child wanted in the way of home companionship.

At the trial he was asked whether he would rather live at his uncle's or at his mother's. His answer was that he would like to live at his uncle's if he had but a companion, as his uncle was hard of hearing and he could not talk to him. Was he often alone? he was asked. His reply was, When his uncle was not at home he was left wholly alone. His uncle, he said, treated him well, thrashing him only when he deserved it, but after his return from his flight to his mother his uncle had "maltreated" him and threatened to throttle him. He had indulged in disrespectful

remarks about his mother in the presence of his uncle because he thought that was the way to please him.

The court hurt Beethoven's pride by sending the case down to the magistracy. A certain deference seems to have been paid to him in the belief that the Dutch " van " was the equivalent of the German " von," and therefore a title of nobility. This was shown not to be so. A story has long been current that, when asked for documentary proofs of his nobility, Beethoven pointed in turn to his head and his heart, and said, " My nobility is here and here." It is always regrettable to have to destroy a romantic legend, but it must be said that there is no warrant whatever for this story in the court report of the case, the questions and answers in which are given verbatim.

The wretched affair, with all its dire consequences to Beethoven's health and pocket and work, dragged on until the summer of 1820. It came before the magistracy and the upper court again and again. Beethoven's appeals and petitions, it must be confessed, breathe a somewhat offensive self-righteousness. He harps alternately upon the wickedness of everybody who is opposed to him and on his own moral perfection. The Mödling priest, as we have seen, had not approved of his way with Carl. This was sufficient for Beethoven to write to the magistracy that this priest was " despised by his congregation " and " suspected of being guilty of illicit intercourse."

At first the right to regulate the boy's education was left to Beethoven, but in March 1819 he resigned his guardianship, " persuaded to take the step, it is fair to assume," says his impartial biographer Thayer, who unearthed all the court records of the affair, " by the magistrates, who, in the end, would have been obliged to remove him." A certain Councillor Tuscher assumed the responsibility at his request; when Tuscher resigned it a couple of months later, ostensibly on the ground that he could not spare the necessary time for it from his official duties, but perhaps in reality because he saw that the magistracy was on the widow's side, he came in for the suspicion and abuse that were sure to be the lot of everyone who took a line that was unpleasing to Beethoven.

The latter now notified the magistracy that he would resume his guardianship, but he was not allowed to do so. The court went thoroughly into the history of the various educational experiments that had been tried upon the boy, and found that he had suffered by being " subject to the whims " of his uncle, and " tossed like a ball from one institution to another." The mother was now to be guardian, as she had all along had a legal right to be, but some honest man was to be appointed co-guardian with her.

Once more Beethoven flung himself into the fray, making his accustomed lurid charges against the moral character of the widow, but objecting strenuously to " her false statements and lies " about himself. His appeal was rejected, whereupon he took the case to a higher court, which, of course, asked for a report from the magistracy.

The latter gave its reasons for its decision — Beethoven's deafness and notorious hatred of his sister-in-law made him an impossible guardian; the mother was by law entitled to the guardianship; her marital infidelity in 1811 had nothing to do with the present case; there was nothing in Beethoven's allegations of " injurious disturbances and interferences " on her part, for it was only natural that a mother should want to see her child once a fortnight or once a month, and to be assured that his clothes were good and clean; these and other things could only seem " injurious " in Beethoven's eyes, but the rest of the world would expect a mother to enquire about her child more often than that. The magistracy's report censured Beethoven for his habit of making reckless and unproven charges; the one definite thing he brought forward was the misconduct of 1811, all the rest being " unproven chatter " that was simply evidence of his passionate hatred of the widow.

So it went on and on until the court decided in Beethoven's favour, he and one Peters being appointed joint guardians. The widow appealed to the Emperor, who confirmed the judgment of the court in July 1820. That the widow was no better than she ought to be was indicated by the fact that she gave birth to another child while the case was being fought.

The magistracy seems to have taken the common-sense view

that the mother had in any case a natural right to a say in the management and the education of her child, that this natural right had been made a legal right by the codicil to her husband's will, and that however benevolent Beethoven's intentions might be, he was in almost every way unfitted for the task he desired to take upon himself.

Little else need be chronicled of these years. When the Congress of Vienna met in 1814 to decide the affairs of Europe after the first fall of Napoleon, Beethoven received from the monarchs and notabilities assembled there such deference as had never previously been the lot of any musician: " he was," we are told, " the object of general attention "; " all strove to do him homage."

It was in this same year that Beethoven made the acquaintance of Anton Schindler, a youth of eighteen years who was then studying the violin with Beethoven's friend Schuppanzigh. Schindler, as the years went on, fastened himself more and more on Beethoven, and in the end became, in fact if not in name, a sort of private secretary and factotum. He was a good-hearted if not particularly intelligent man; he made himself a little ridiculous, after the composer's death, by having " Friend of Beethoven " printed on his visiting cards. He published a biography of the master in which fancy so often takes the place of fact that it took half a century of careful research on the part of other biographers to get to the real truth of many things; some of his fictions are in circulation in the ordinary Beethoven biographies even to this day.

Fidelio was revived in May 1814, with a new overture in E major, which, however, was not ready until the second performance.

The chief works written by Beethoven during the latter years of the period we have just been considering were the E minor piano sonata (op. 90), the cantata *The Glorious Moment,* and the overture in C (op. 115) in 1814, the 'cello sonatas in C major and D major (op. 102) and the choral and orchestral *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage* in 1815, the piano sonata in A major (op. 101) and the song-cycle *To the Distant Beloved* in 1816, and part of the great B flat piano sonata (op. 106) and of the Ninth

Symphony in 1817, with further work on these two and on the Mass in D in 1818 and 1819.

It will be seen from the above list that Beethoven's productiveness had slowed down considerably. There were various reasons for this — the disputes over his nephew, frequent ill-health, a new feature of which was eye trouble, but above all a slackening of the pace of composition; as his ideas grew more profound they cost him far more labour in the shaping of them. This was especially true of the Ninth Symphony and the Mass in D, each of which occupied him, off and on, for some years.

In the summer of 1818 his friend and patron and pupil the Archduke Rudolph had been appointed Archbishop of Olmütz, his installation being fixed for the 20th March, 1820. Of his own prompting Beethoven began work upon a great Mass for the occasion; but he took so long over it, almost sweating blood over some parts of it, that the installation ceremony was over long before it was finished; it was first performed (or rather portions of it) at a concert in Vienna on the 7th May, 1824.

For admirers of the master's genius the negotiations with publishers over this Mass constitute the saddest chapter of his whole life. We have seen how his curious standard of honour in business matters got him into trouble with the London publishers in 1816; Neate, who was then acting as his agent in London, received a letter from a publisher that contained the sentence, " For God's sake, don't buy anything of Beethoven! " It has to be recognised frankly that his dealings in the affair of the Mass are irreconcilable with any ordinary standard of commercial probity, still less with his constant bestowal of moral certificates on himself, and still less again with the nature of the magnificent work on which he was then engaged.

No fewer than four publishers had the promise of the Mass at the same time; he took money in advance on the strength of some of these promises; and in the end not one of these publishers received the work. His letters are full of flat misstatements of fact. It is only our love and reverence for the great artist that makes us, when speaking of this affair, soften our language to an extent we

should not dream of doing in the case of an ordinary business man; but there is no escaping and obscuring the evidence, and the verdict of one of his German biographers — "the conscientious reporter cannot ignore facts which lie notoriously before him, and hard as it may be, cannot acquit Beethoven of the reproach that his conduct was not in harmony with the principles of strict justice and uprightness" — certainly does not err on the side of immoderation.

Though not so short of money as he tried to make out — for he clung tenaciously to his seven bank shares for the future benefit of his nephew — his income had undoubtedly diminished of late. He was, as we have seen, brooding a long time over his big works, and he could no longer turn out smaller ones so rapidly as in his younger days. He was becoming more and more eccentric, more and more oblivious to the hard facts of the outer world.

In 1820 he was arrested as a vagrant, the police officer refusing to credit the story that this crazy ragamuffin was the great Beethoven. He suffered a good deal from rheumatism and jaundice; the latter was probably the first unmistakable hint of the malady of the liver that was to carry him off six years later. The one thing that never deserted him was his conviction that he had a sort of divine mission to regulate the lives of his relations; and we find him once more interfering in the domestic affairs of his brother Johann, whose wife had proved to be as unchaste as Carl's.

Johann had prospered so exceedingly that he had bought a nice property at Gneixendorf, where he spent his summers, coming to live in Vienna in the winter. His naïve vanity prompted him to style himself "Johann van Beethoven, Land Proprietor," which his brother countered ironically with "Ludwig van Beethoven, Brain Proprietor." In the summer of 1822 he sought a reconciliation with Johann, who could be helpful to him in business matters; but their relations were always being disturbed by his suspicions. His life at this time was a wretched one; in his world of dreams no one could give him companionship, while in the outer world he was in incessant conflict with landlords and servants — all of whom, of course, were "rascals" and "liars" and

" swindlers " — and involved in endless correspondence with publishers.

In the spring of 1822 he met in Vienna Rossini, who was then the idol of Europe. It was said at one time that Beethoven had refused to see the young world-conqueror, but Rossini, years after, said that this was not the case; they met, but conversation was practically impossible by reason of Beethoven's deafness and Rossini's ignorance of German. In the following April, Franz Liszt, then a boy of eleven or so who was exciting wonder as a piano prodigy, visited Vienna; whether, as the story used to run, Beethoven attended his concert and afterwards kissed him cannot now be definitely decided.

The Mass was finished in 1822. Instead of having it published, Beethoven conceived the idea — or let it be suggested to him — of offering it for subscription to the various Courts in manuscript copies. He received in all ten orders for it; included in the list were the King of France (Louis XVIII, who also sent him a gold medal), the Czar of Russia, the Kings of Prussia, Saxony, and Denmark, and Prince Galitzin.

The last-named was a young Russian enthusiast for music who lived in St. Petersburg. He was a fanatical admirer of Beethoven, and it is in large measure to him that we owe the last great quartets of the master. In November 1822 he commissioned from him one, two, or three string quartets, for which the composer was to fix his own price; Beethoven named fifty ducats for each. In the early part of 1824 he turned his attention once more to the question of the publication of the Mass. He passed over all the publishers with whom he had so compromised himself in the previous years, and offered it simultaneously to Schott of Mainz and Probst of Leipzig; it was ultimately issued by the former.

Towards the end of 1822 *Fidelio* was revived once more, and was so successful that the theatre management commissioned from him another opera. This was never written, the composer being unable, in spite of all the trouble he took, to find a libretto that he thought suitable. It was in November 1822 also that the Philharmonic Society of London offered him £50 for a manuscript

symphony, and though Beethoven protested he could get more from other nations he accepted the commission. Anton Tayber, the Imperial Chamber Composer, died at this time, and Beethoven petitioned to be appointed his successor. The position, however, was allowed to expire with its last occupant.

There is comparatively little to record either of his life or of his works during his last three or four years. The *Bagatelles* (op. 126) were written in 1823, and the three string quartets that were the first-fruits of Prince Galitzin's commission (in E flat, op. 127, in B flat, op. 130, in A minor, op. 132) belong to the years 1824–5; to these have to be added the C sharp minor (op. 131) — which Beethoven thought his greatest quartet — the F major (op. 135), and the *Grand Fugue,* which was originally intended for the finale of op. 130. The Ninth Symphony was finished in February, 1824; it had occupied the composer's mind for ten years, while the idea of a setting of Schiller's *Ode to Joy* (which forms the choral ending) dates from 1793. His sketch-books and his letters show that he had projected a tenth symphony.

As there was some talk of Berlin's getting the first performance of the Ninth, thirty of his most influential admirers addressed to him a public petition to let Vienna have that honour. After a momentary outburst of rage at the publication of the letter he consented; and the work was given on the 7th May, 1824, at the same concert that saw the first performance of some portions of the Mass in D. The performance was rather a poor one, but the enthusiasm was immense.

Either at the end of the whole work or after the Scherzo there occurred the incident that has been so often described — the deaf composer being turned round by the contralto soloist, Fräulein Unger, to see the applauding crowd. After the fifth outburst of applause the Police Commissioner shouted "Silence!" three rounds of acclamation being all that the Emperor himself and his family were supposed to have. Owing to the heavy expenses and other circumstances the profit from the concert was only 420 florins, while a second concert a few days later resulted in a deficit; Beethoven promptly charged the management and his friend

Schindler with having cheated him! The symphony was given in London for the first time by the Philharmonic Society on the 29th March.

The score he dedicated to the King of Prussia, from whom, in spite of his professed contempt for rank, he was anxious to receive a decoration. He wanted to wear, at the Vienna performance of the Ninth Symphony, the gold medal given him by the King of France, but was persuaded not to do so, as the weight of it would have pulled his collar down. The King of Prussia sent, instead of the expected decoration, a diamond ring — or so it was stated in his letter. What arrived, however, was a single-stone ring of a " reddish " colour that was worth only 300 florins, paper money. There is reason to believe that at some point or other this had been substituted for the ring actually sent.

The nephew Carl had been placed first at a school, then at the Vienna University (1823–5). His uncle wanted him to be a teacher of languages, but the young man's inclinations were towards either the army or commerce — a choice that distressed the composer greatly. In 1825 Carl was placed at the Polytechnic Institute for further study, and lodged with a government official named Schlemmer. He was fond of pleasure, especially dancing and billiards, and there seems no reason to doubt that he had got into undesirable company and run up debts. His uncle had no idea how to manage him; the young man, just beginning to taste the delights of life, was especially irked by his small allowance for pocket-money and by such restrictions as not being allowed out at night without a written permission from Schlemmer.

On the 30th July, 1826, as near as we can establish the date, he tried to put an end to his miseries by blowing out his brains; but though he fired with a pistol in each hand he inflicted only a comparatively harmless skull wound. The event almost broke up Beethoven completely; he loved the boy passionately in his own way, and could not see as clearly as his friends could how unfitted he was to play the rôle of guardian. Every possible attempt was made to minimise the scandal and to mollify the police, and as soon as Carl was convalescent he and his uncle went to stay with

the latter's brother Johann on his estate at Gneixendorf (28th September).

It was curious that Beethoven should have been willing to stay in the same house with the woman of whose moral character he had so low an opinion, but bad as she was in some respects she seems to have been normally sensible and broad-minded in others. During his stay with Johann, Beethoven tried to induce him to disinherit his wife and leave all his money to Carl.

A great deal of fiction has been written about these last months of Beethoven's life, Schindler being answerable for much of it. He was anxious, after the composer's death, to magnify his own importance in the great man's life, and he was liberal in accusations against other people who were rather more in the picture at that time than he liked. Johann has been accused, without any evidence, of being niggardly with firewood, etc., during Ludwig's stay with him, and of having sent him back to Vienna in an open carriage and thereby caused him to catch the chill that was to prove fatal.

The immediate cause of the journey was a letter that Johann handed to his brother (conversation, of course, being almost impossible, by reason of the composer's deafness), at the end of November 1826; in this he pointed out, quite sensibly, that the sybaritic Carl was settling down lazily to a life of ease in the country, and that the co-guardian Breuning had urged the necessity of getting him back to town and making him settle down to the serious business of a re-start in life; in the lad's own interests, therefore, Johann urged that Ludwig ought to take him to Vienna at once. There seems to have been a final quarrel over the question of the will, and then Carl and his uncle set out on Friday, 1st December. Johann could not lend them his closed carriage, as his wife had recently taken it with her to Vienna. The pair arrived in town the next day.

Part of the journey had undoubtedly been done in an open conveyance in bad weather, and Beethoven slept on the Friday night in an unwarmed bed in a wretched village inn. A fever seized him in the night, and by the time he arrived home he was plainly very

ill, though he does not seem to have taken his condition seriously for another two or three days, when he sent for Holz, a young man to whom he had become greatly attached a couple of years before, and who had, in large part, taken Schindler's place as factotum — a circumstance which did not commend him to the latter gentleman.

The story used to be that Carl, who had been told to bring a physician, forgot to do so for several days, but thought of it at last and turned the commission over to a marker in a billiard-room he frequented, and that the marker, being himself taken to a hospital some time later, happened to remember the matter and spoke of it to the physician, Dr. Wawruch.

This is merely one of Schindler's many fictions concerning these last days. Wawruch was called in on the 5th December. Beethoven turned against him, as he always did sooner or later against his doctors, and others were called in to help him from time to time. There could have been little hope from the first of saving the sick man. He probably weathered a pneumonia in the first week or two, and then the old stomach and liver troubles asserted themselves. Jaundice came, and then dropsy, for which he was tapped four times between the 20th December, 1826, and the 27th February, 1827. Johann had arrived on the 10th December, and thereafter was in constant attendance on his brother, together with Holz, Schindler, and other friends.

Some two years before this, a German living in England, one Stumpff, gathering from Beethoven's conversation that he admired Handel above all other composers, had resolved to send him the complete edition of the latter's works as soon as it became available. The forty volumes of Dr. Arnold's great edition arrived in February, and gave the sick man much pleasure.

On the 8th February he wrote to thank Stumpff, reminded him of the Philharmonic Society's desire to give a concert for his benefit some years before, and suggested that such a concert now would be very welcome to him. The Society's reply was to remit £100 to him, "to be applied to his comforts and necessities during his illness," and further assistance was promised if necessary.

(Beethoven was, as usual, concealing the real state of his finances; he stubbornly refused to touch his bank stock, which he wanted to go intact to Carl.)

The sick man, on the 18th, while expressing his deep gratitude for the gift, asked the Society not to abandon the idea of a concert, from the proceeds of which the £100 could be deducted, and promised to compose for it a new symphony, " which lies already sketched in my desk," a new overture or whatever other work the Society might desire.

About this time also he read through a number of Schubert's songs, and recognised the remarkable genius they displayed. Schubert himself visited him a week or so before his death.

It had been decided to place Carl in the army, so that he might acquire some of the discipline he so sorely needed; and the young man left to join his regiment at Iglau on the 2nd January. He never saw his uncle again. The day after his departure Beethoven wrote a letter to Dr. Bach declaring Carl to be his sole legatee, but the will proper was not signed till two days before his death. After the fourth operation he seems to have been convinced that there was no longer any hope for him.

The long death-struggle set in on the 24th March and lasted two days: death took place at five o'clock in the afternoon of the 26th. The powerful frame and the still undamaged lungs fought to the last. Just before the end, a flash of lightning and a violent thunder-clap seemed to rouse the unconscious man, in whose throat the death-rattle had been heard since three o'clock; he opened his eyes, lifted his right hand, and held his clenched fist aloft for several seconds: it was an appropriately characteristic gesture for a Beethoven to die to. There is a touch of pathetic irony in the fact that the only person present at his death, with the exception of Anselm Hüttenbrenner, was his brother Johann's wife.

The story has already been told in an earlier page of the tardy discovery of the bank certificates in a secret drawer in his desk, along with a portrait of Therese von Brunswick and the letter

to the " Immortal Beloved." His estate was valued at what, in sterling values before the late war, would be about £3,000.

The funeral took place on the 29th. The schools were closed, and a crowd of 20,000 people gathered in the square in front of the house. One of the torch-bearers was Schubert. The body was taken to the cemetery in the village of Währing, close by; over the grave was erected a pyramid with the one word BEETHOVEN.

During the nineteenth century the grave became so neglected that in 1863 the Vienna Society of the Friends of Music had the body exhumed and re-buried. In 1888 Beethoven's remains and those of Schubert were taken to the Central Cemetery in Vienna, and laid in their final rest side by side.

Carl inherited not only Beethoven's estate but that of his uncle Johann, who died in 1848, leaving him 42,000 florins; Johann's wife had died twenty years before. Carl died in 1858, leaving a widow and several children. The family sank lower and lower in the social scale during the next couple of generations, and the last of the Beethovens is said to have been enrolled during the Great War in the Austrian Territorials, where he served as a butt and a drudge for his comrades, and to have died of paralysis in a Vienna garrison hospital in January 1918.

FIDELIO

BEETHOVEN took up various operatic schemes during the course of his life, but only one of them came to fruition. It has often been said that his genius was essentially symphonic rather than operatic; but that opinion was not held by Beethoven himself. He was always anxious, for financial as well as artistic reasons, to make a success in the theatre; and if *Fidelio* remains his only opera that is merely because he was never afterwards able to find a libretto that really appealed to him.

In 1803 there was great rivalry in operatic circles in Vienna. The Court Theatre was under the direction of Baron Braun, while the rival theatre, the Theater-an-der-Wien, was being run by Emmanuel Schikaneder (1751–1812), a strange creature (he died insane), a jack-of-all-trades, singer, actor, dramatist, theatrical manager, and what not, who is now remembered mainly for the fact that he was the instigator and part librettist of Mozart's *The Magic Flute,* and the man most directly answerable for the train of events that led to Beethoven's *Fidelio.*

Vienna, in the early years of the nineteenth century, had become sated with frivolous opera, and had shown signs of turning to a more serious style. Cherubini had made a success in Paris with his *Lodoiska,* and in March 1802 Schikaneder produced the work at the Theater-an-der-Wien. The Court Theatre countered this move by producing Cherubini's *The Water Carrier* and *Medea;* but the shrewd Schikaneder stole a march on it again by bringing out *The Water Carrier,* under the title of *Graf Armand,* a day before the Court Theatre.

Cherubini being obviously the man of the hour, Baron Braun went to Paris early in 1803 to secure him exclusively for his theatre. It became necessary for Schikaneder to find an equally strong counter-attraction, and his choice fell on Beethoven, whose reputation had been growing in Vienna for several years. It is true that he had not yet written an opera, but his music to the *Prometheus* ballet a couple of years before had proved popular. Schikaneder saw to it that in March 1803 a preliminary announcement of a coming opera by Beethoven appeared in one of the newspapers; and that the commission had actually been given to the composer is evident from the fact that, in accordance with the practice of the time, he was given lodgings in the theatre.

In February 1804 the Theater-an-der-Wien was sold to Baron Braun, and Beethoven had apparently to leave his lodgings. Baron Braun first of all installed at the Theater-an-der-Wien Josef Sonnleithner, the secretary of the Court Theatre; but when the latter retired in August, Baron Braun handed over the direction of the theatre to Schikaneder once more, and the invitation to Beethoven to compose an opera was repeated.

The libretto of the opera first commissioned from Beethoven was to have been by Schikaneder himself, but what the title of it was we do not know. Certain sketches for the opera, however, were found among Beethoven's papers after his death, among them a trio in G major that was afterwards worked up into the duet between Leonora and Florestan, "Oh blissful hour, oh joy of heaven!" in the second act of *Fidelio*. Perhaps the reason for Beethoven's not having made greater progress with the commission was that he was not deeply interested in the subject, whatever it was. It was otherwise with the commission given him by Baron Braun; this appealed to him so greatly that the score was completely finished by the summer of 1805.

In those days there was no copyright in operatic libretti, and it was a common practice for a poet, a composer, or a theatrical manager to appropriate any subject that had proved to be a success elsewhere. The original of *Fidelio* was an opera entitled *Léonore, ou l'Amour Conjugal,* that had been produced in Paris

on the 19th February, 1798. The text of this was by Jean Nicolas Bouilly (1763–1842), a lawyer who had written a number of successful libretti, including that for Cherubini's *The Water Carrier*. The composer was Pierre Gaveaux (born 1761), a tenor singer who had taken to writing music, and, after having composed more than thirty operas, died mad in 1825.

The possibilities of the subject soon attracted the attention of the pirates in other countries. It was set afresh, to Italian words, by Ferdinando Paër (1771–1826), under the title of *Leonora, ossia l'Amor Conjugale,* and produced at Dresden, where Paër was at that time Kapellmeister, on the 3rd October, 1804. At that time, as we have seen, Beethoven was already engaged on his own opera on the subject, the text being provided for him by Josef Sonnleithner.

The work was first performed at the Theater-an-der-Wien, under the title of *Fidelio,* on the 20th November, 1805; it was in three acts. It had bad luck from the commencement. Napoleon had occupied Vienna only a week before; most of the Viennese either avoided the theatres or were unable to get to them from the suburbs, and the audience was mainly composed of French officers and soldiers, who naturally would understand very little of a work in a strange tongue. After the third performance, on the 22nd November, Beethoven withdrew the opera.

His friends, a few of whom had seen one or other of the performances, felt that sundry changes would be necessary before the work could hope to become a great success. The composer, who was always very difficult to manage in affairs of this kind, was persuaded to meet a number of friends in December, at the house of his patron Prince Lichnowsky, for a frank discussion of the opera in its present form and equally frank suggestions as to how it might be improved.

The meeting lasted from seven in the evening till one o'clock the next morning. Princess Lichnowsky played the score on the piano, accompanied from memory by the violinist Clement, who was at that time leader of the orchestra at the Theater-an-der-Wien; among others present were Beethoven's brother Caspar,

his friend Stephan von Breuning, the poet von Collin, for whose tragedy on the subject of Coriolanus Beethoven later wrote his overture bearing that title, two of Mozart's brothers-in-law — the actor Lange and the bass singer Meier, who had taken the part of Don Pizarro in the opera — the official theatre poet, Friedrich Treitschke, and a young man twenty-two years old, Josef August Röckel (1783–1870), who had just joined the Theater-an-der-Wien as tenor, and who was already cast for the part of Florestan in the projected revival of the opera, in place of the ageing Demmer, who had sung the part in the first production.

With difficulty Beethoven was persuaded to consent to the sacrifice of certain numbers, and to the reduction of the opera from three acts to two by Stephan von Breuning. In this form it was produced on the 29th March, 1806, again under Beethoven, and, against his wish, once more under the title of *Fidelio;* the libretto issued at the time bears the title of *Leonora, or the Triumph of Wedded Love.* The only change in the cast was the substitution of Röckel for Demmer. (This Röckel, by the way, was the father of the August Röckel who was so closely associated with Wagner in the revolutionary days of 1848 and 1849.)

Beethoven had worked so hard and conscientiously upon the opera that there was time for only one orchestral rehearsal before the performance, a fact that he characteristically failed to take into consideration when blaming the players for certain shortcomings.

The work, in its recast and abbreviated form, looked like becoming a great popular success when, on the 10th April, after the fifth performance, Beethoven withdrew his score. The always suspicious composer not only believed that there was a cabal against him in the theatre, but got it into his head that he had been cheated in the matter of his royalties. He rushed off with his charge to Baron Braun, whose tact had almost smoothed the angry Ludwig down when an unfortunate comparison with Mozart brought the interview to a stormy end.

During the years immediately following, and indeed until the end

of his days, Beethoven sought anxiously for a book for another opera, but without success. He was all the more anxious to try his luck again in the theatre because *Fidelio,* on its next revival, proved a decided attraction. In 1814 three of the officials of the Court Opera were granted a benefit, the choice of the work being left to them, so long as it did not cost the theatre anything. In view of the great respect in which Beethoven was held in Vienna at that time, and his undoubted drawing power, they decided to ask him to grant them permission to revive *Fidelio*. He consented, and once more worked over the opera afresh, the many changes in it this time being made by Treitschke.

On the 23rd May, 1814, the opera was given at the Kärnthnerthor Theatre, in two acts, in the final form in which we now possess it. Beethoven conducted the first performance, but as his deafness and his abstraction were very marked at this time, the Kapellmeister Umlauf stood behind him for safety's sake, and it was to Umlauf that the orchestra really looked for direction. The sixth performance was for the benefit of Beethoven himself.

Of the success of the opera this time there could be no doubt; it was taken up by one German town after another and, aided by a succession of great Fidelios, of whom the best known were Wilhelmina Schroeder-Devrient and Lilli Lehmann, has remained to this day one of the most revered monuments of German music. It was given in London, in German, in 1832, with Schroeder-Devrient as Leonora, and in English, with Malibran, three years later. In 1851 it was given in Italian, with Cruvelli as Leonora and Sims Reeves as Florestan; and on this occasion Beethoven had the inestimable privilege of having his spoken dialogues set to recitative by the composer of *The Bohemian Girl.*

There were no less than four overtures to the opera known to our fathers, and the numbering of three of them is rather confusing. At the first production, in 1805, the overture played was, in essence, that known now as the *Leonora No. 2*. On the occasion of the 1806 production the overture was the version of this known as the *Leonora No. 3*. In 1806, with a view to a performance in

Prague that never came off, Beethoven simplified the *No. 3* into what is known as the *Leonora No. 1* overture, which remained in manuscript until five years after the composer's death, when it was published as "an overture in C, Opus 138," by Haslinger in 1832.

For the revival of 1814 Beethoven wrote an entirely new overture in E major, always known as the *Fidelio* Overture. As this was not ready for the first performance, however, the overture played on that occasion was that to *The Ruins of Athens,* a play for which Beethoven had written some incidental music in 1811.

The matter was yet further complicated by the discovery in 1926 of another version of the *Leonora No. 2,* the manuscript of this being found in the archives of the Leipzig publishers, Breitkopf & Härtel. The composer's own manuscript of the *Leonora No. 2* appears to be lost; we know it only from a copy by another hand that is now in the Prussian State Library in Berlin. In the manuscript recently found in the Breitkopf archives, which differs at sundry points from the published version of the *No. 2,* alterations and abbreviations seem to have been made by Beethoven's own hand; this version was probably the overture actually played at the performances of 1805, and so represents the composer's final conception of the *No. 2.* The newly discovered overture was played for the first time in England at a British Broadcasting Company's concert, under Hermann Scherchen, of Frankfort, in February 1927.

When a composer leaves no less than four overtures to the one opera, there is bound to be some difference of opinion as to which of them should be used in the theatre. There has been a good deal of controversy over the four overtures to *Fidelio,* but it has settled itself, like most controversies, by a mixture of reason and compromise.

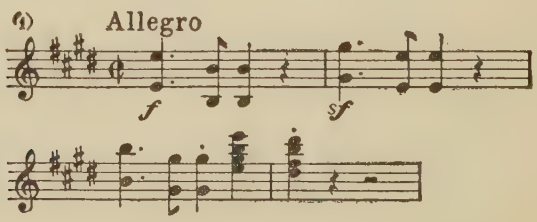
A number of people contend that the proper overture to play is the *Leonora No. 3,* on the grounds that it was the *Leonora* overture that Beethoven originally wrote for the opera, and of the three versions of it the one known as *No. 3* is undoubtedly the

greatest. Against this it can be urged that the *Leonora No. 3* is not only too colossal in itself as a prelude to the opera — for after it the scene of light comedy with which the opera opens is apt to seem a little tame — but, in a sense, the overture makes the opera itself appear almost superfluous. This, in essence, was Wagner's theory; he held that everything that is vital in the dramatic and spiritual idea of the opera has been said with such point and force and concentration in the *Leonora No. 3* that the opera itself is only a dilution of this in two acts.

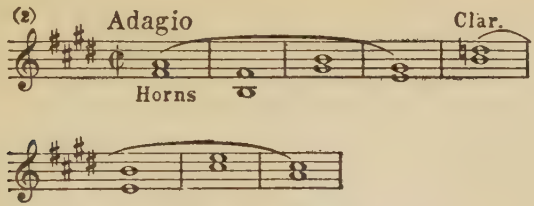
The partisans of the *Leonora No. 3* further say that the necessity for the so-called *Fidelio* overture, in E major, has now disappeared. There were two good reasons why Beethoven should have written it in 1814 — it was easier for the orchestra than any of the others, and it was easier for the average audience of that day to understand; but the *Leonora No. 3* is now part and parcel of every orchestral player's repertory, while it is thoroughly familiar to every concert-goer.

All this is quite true; but in spite of it the *Fidelio* overture is now always played as an introduction to the opera, while the *Leonora No. 3* is generally played later, either between the first and second acts or between the first and second scenes of the second act. On the relative advantages and disadvantages of these last two methods of procedure we shall have something to say later.

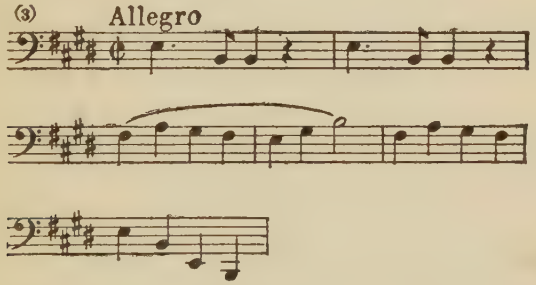
The *Fidelio* overture commences with five allegro bars in which we have foreshadowed the curt theme that will afterwards form the principal subject:



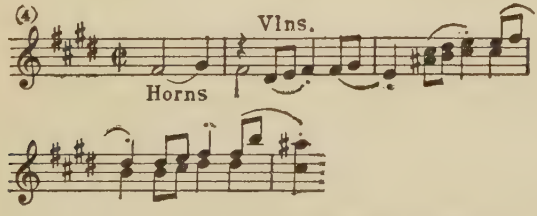
This is succeeded by an adagio phrase for the horns, followed by the clarinets:



Both No. 1 and No. 2 are then repeated in another key, after which there come some soft harmonies in the strings, which gradually work up to a fortissimo and then die away again into a triplet ornamentation to No. 2 in the wind. The allegro proper commences with the full version of the theme already hinted at in No. 1:



It is developed for a little while on Mozartian lines, Beethoven's object evidently being to keep it as simple as possible, and in time it merges into the second subject:



These two main subjects, with the little subsidiary matter attached to them, are worked out in the most transparent fashion, Beethoven, as might be expected, drawing a good deal of significance from the pronouncedly rhythmic figure shown in No. 1.

Near the end there is a short adagio episode in which No. 2 is heard once more, entwined about with triplets as before; then Beethoven seizes again upon the rhythm of No. 1, alters the time to presto, and finishes off the overture with a feverishly joyous coda.

Although the *Fidelio* overture has nothing like the dramatic power and the close programmatic detail of the *Leonora No. 3,* it also, in its way, summarises the opera, triumph evidently being achieved at the end over the darker influences hinted at in No. 2.

For the proper understanding of the story we have to know what is supposed to have happened before the opera begins. Pizarro, a cruel, tyrannical man, is the Governor of a prison not far from Seville. He has been thwarted in some of his evil plans by a high-minded and incorruptible political opponent, Florestan, and having seized upon the latter's person he has secretly thrown him into one of the deepest dungeons in the prison.

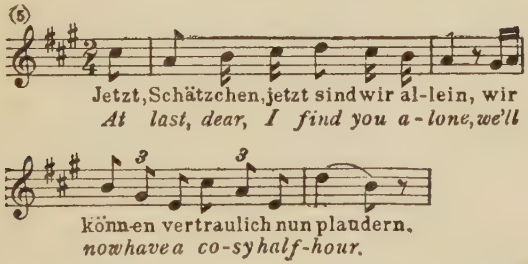
Nobody knows whither Florestan has disappeared; but his faithful wife, Leonora, has a suspicion that he has been put away by Pizarro, and in order to discover whether he is in the prison she has dressed herself as a young man, assumed the name of Fidelio, and obtained the post of assistant to the chief gaoler, Rocco. Not only has Fidelio, by his assiduousness, won the confidence of Rocco, but he has inspired love in the heart of the gaoler's pretty daughter Marcelline, who is in turn loved in vain by Rocco's doorkeeper, the young Jaquino.

When the curtain rises we see the courtyard of the prison. In the background is the tower of the castle, by the side of which runs a high wall; entrances and exits through this are made by means of a small gate, which it is the business of Jaquino to open and close. On the left of the stage from the spectator are prison cells; the numbered doors are encased with iron, and barred and bolted; the windows are also barred. On the right is the castle garden, entry to which is through a row of iron railings. In the left foreground is the door leading to Rocco's quarters, and in front of this, when the curtain goes up, Marcelline is standing at

a table, busy ironing; near her is a brasier, on which she warms the iron from time to time.

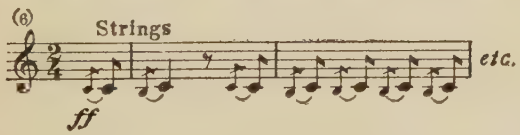
By the gate in the back wall is Jaquino's little hut: he spends part of his time opening the gate every now and then to people who come in with parcels, partly in running up to Marcelline's table and making love to her.

The music of this opening scene forms a complete contrast to that of the remainder of the opera; it is couched in the light Mozartian vein. Approaching Marcelline and rubbing his hands together, Jaquino compliments himself and her on being at last alone, so that they can talk about marriage:



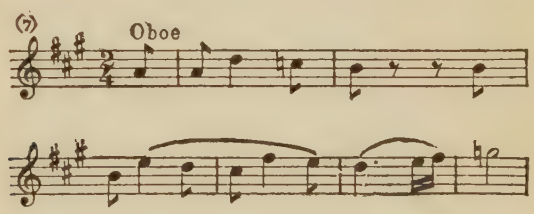
The indifferent Marcelline goes steadily on with her work; the subject is not as interesting to her as it is to him. While he urges her to show a more friendly spirit towards him and name the day, she merely chaffs him about his eagerness.

He is just suggesting that they might get married in a few weeks when there comes a loud knocking at the door:



"To the devil with this eternal knocking!" cries Jaquino; "it always comes just when I am getting things nicely going." While he is opening the door, Marcelline confides to us how truly sorry she is for him. His devotion is hopeless, for all her love has been given to Fidelio.

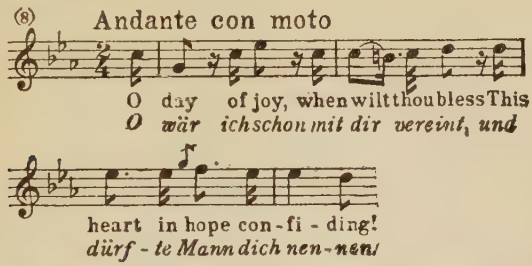
Jaquino, having finished at the door, returns, and after asking "Where was I?" plunges into his favourite subject once more, while Marcelline ejaculates resignedly, "Here he is; he is going to begin all over again!" Finally losing patience, she tells him he is making her life a burden to her, and assures him that she will never marry him, either to-day, to-morrow, or in the future; she is sorry for him, she says aside, but she has to be firm with him. When she mentions Fidelio in her aside, during Jaquino's absence at the door, a tender little phrase comes out in the oboe and bassoon:



She is just protesting that she has never given him her promise when the knocking is again heard, and, Jaquino being called away to his duties again, Marcelline expresses her relief at the welcome interruption in a little coloratura. When Jaquino returns, a spoken dialogue follows. If this isn't the two hundredth time he has opened that door to-day, he says, his name is not Kaspar Eustach Jaquino! Anyhow he can settle down now to a little talk. But just then there is another knock, and after that another. After this last, the worried Jaquino hopes for a little peace; but he has no sooner settled down than Rocco's voice is heard calling him from the garden. "Let him wait!" he says angrily; "now about our love —"

Marcelline interrupts him; he must go at once, because her father will want news of Fidelio. Jaquino shows signs of jealousy at this name; but as Rocco calls him more peremptorily than before he is forced to go, promising Marcelline, however, that he will be back in a couple of minutes. He goes through the door into the garden, and Marcelline, left alone, tells us again how sorry she is for him: she was really fond of him until Fidelio came into the

house, but since then everything within her is changed. She sings a tender little aria:


Andante con moto
O day of joy, when wilt thou bless This
O wär ich schon mit dir vereint, und
heart in hope con-fi-ding!
dürf-te Mann dich nen-nen!

in which she looks forward to the day when she shall be married to Fidelio, although, like a good German maiden of the end of the eighteenth century, she blushes to confess that her mind runs on such a subject. But this does not prevent her from painting an intimate little picture of their life together — a quiet little house, days of honest toil, and evenings of affectionate communion together.

She is interrupted by the entry of Rocco and Jaquino, the latter carrying some garden tools, with which he goes into Rocco's house. The gaoler tells his daughter that he is anxiously expecting Fidelio, who has gone to fetch some letters that the Governor is awaiting, and to fulfil other commissions. Perhaps he has been detained at the smith's, opines Marcelline. Just then there is a knocking at the door; Jaquino goes to open it, Marcelline gives an eager cry of " Here he is! " and Leonora enters.

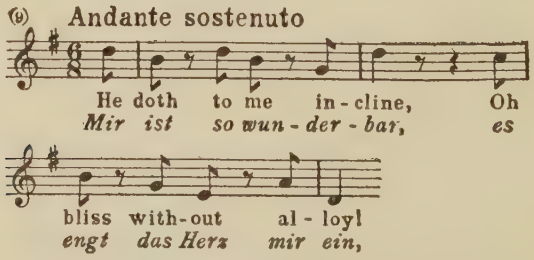
It is a testimony both to the moving seriousness of the story in itself and the skill with which Beethoven has treated it that we never become conscious of anything humorous in the situation of Marcelline hoping to marry one of her own sex.

Leonora wears a dark doublet, a red vest, dark pantaloons, high boots, and a broad belt of black leather with a copper buckle. On her back is a sort of knapsack, and in her hands she carries some chains, which she throws down by Jaquino's hut. At her side a metal case hangs by a cord. She looks tired and hot, and Marcelline, with an ejaculation of sympathy, runs to her as if to wipe

her face with her handkerchief. Bidding her wait a moment, Rocco helps Leonora to get rid of her heavy equipment, while Jaquino moves backwards and forwards, keeping the others under observation all the while.

Leonora confesses that she is indeed hot, for she has had to hurry; the smith had been a long time repairing the chains, but at least he has done the job well; none of the prisoners will be able to break them! She gives Rocco the bill for twelve piastres, and the gaoler, running his eye over it, congratulates Fidelio on his zeal and economy; in the six months during which he has had charge of the commissariat he has saved the prison more money than Rocco could have done in a whole year. In an aside he surmises that Fidelio is so attentive to business because he is in love with Marcelline. He shall have his reward, says Rocco, glancing from Fidelio to Marcelline and back again; and the somewhat embarrassed Fidelio has to protest that whatever he does is done solely from a sense of duty.

Rocco goes to examine the chains, and Marcelline, who has been watching Fidelio all this while with visibly increasing emotion, begins one of the most famous numbers of the opera. It is a canon — that is to say, each voice takes up the original phrase after an interval. Marcelline is full of the thought that Fidelio loves her:



When the whole of the eight-bar phrase is finished, Leonora takes it up; she is uneasy about this love of Marcelline, that threatens to be dangerous. When Rocco strikes in, it is to muse upon the happiness that the future holds for this affectionate pair; while

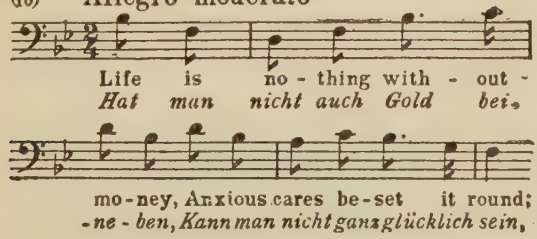
Jaquino, who enters last, tells us that his hair is standing on end at the thought that Marcelline's father is agreeable to her marriage with Fidelio.

A modern composer would, of course, have found another melody for Jaquino's sentiments than for those of Marcelline or Fidelio; but the epoch in which Beethoven wrote paid less attention to these minutiæ of musical realism; the form is allowed to dominate the expression, and the canon is so delightful a piece of music that we cannot find it in our hearts to quarrel with Beethoven on abstract theoretical grounds.

The canon being finished, Jaquino goes back into his hut, and Rocco, turning to Fidelio, tells him that, though he knows little about his antecedents, he is so pleased with him that he will welcome him as a son-in-law, whereupon Marcelline eagerly interjects, " And how soon, dearest father? " Rocco smiles indulgently at her anxiety. Very soon, he says, they will have a little more leisure to think about it; as they know, the Governor is now paying them the usual visit of inspection; he will be gone again in a few days, and then they can decide about it. " The day after his departure, then," says Marcelline, greatly to the embarrassment of Leonora, who, however, has to feign delight as well as she can.

It is time now that Rocco, as one of the principal characters, shall have his aria, and, taking as his cue the remark that love is not the only essential to a happy marriage, he breaks out into a song in praise of money:

(10) **Allegro moderato**


Life is no - thing with - out -
Hat man nicht auch Gold bei -
mo - ney, Anxious cares be - set it round;
- ne - ben, Kann man nicht ganz glücklich sein,

the sovereign cure for most of the evils of the world.

There may be something in Rocco's philosophy, says Leonora,

but to her thinking the true source of wedded happiness is the union of two hearts that are attuned to each other. Then, checking her earnestness, she changes the subject. There is one sign of Rocco's favour that she would be glad to have, but, to her sorrow, she sees that he withholds it from her. Apparently she does not enjoy his full confidence; she often sees him go into the subterranean cells of the prison, and come back out of breath and exhausted. Why does he not allow her to accompany him? It would give her so much gratification to help him at his work and share his hardships.

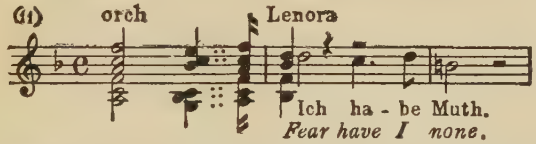
Rocco tells her that he has the strictest orders not to let anyone else whatever into the cells, but he confesses that the heavy work is becoming too much for him at his age. Still, although the Governor is very strict, perhaps he will be able to obtain from him permission to let Fidelio accompany him. But there is *one* cell, he continues, in which he will not be able to let Fidelio enter, however much he may trust him. " Perhaps, father," says Marcelline, " that is the prisoner of whom you have sometimes told me." Leonora cautiously asks if this prisoner has been there long. " Over two years," replies Rocco. " Two years? " cries Leonora excitedly; and then, mastering herself, she adds, " He must have been a great criminal." " Or else, which comes to the same thing," answers Rocco, " he must have had powerful enemies."

" Does no one know then," asks Marcelline, " who he is and whence he came? " The gaoler replies that the prisoner has often wished to speak to him about all this, but he has checked him, for the less a gaoler talks to his captives the better; he can do a prisoner little good, while he, for his part, may be tempted into saying more than is discreet.

However, this particular prisoner will not trouble him very long, for his days seem numbered. For the last month, on the Governor's orders, Pizarro has been giving him less and less food; during the last twenty-four hours he has had nothing to eat but two ounces of black bread and half a cup of water; he has no straw to lie on, and no light but that of a lamp. Marcelline begs her father not to take Fidelio to him, for the young man would

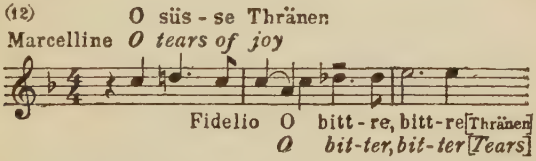
not be able to endure the sight; but Leonora demands why not, for she has strength and courage.

Rocco strikes Fidelio approvingly on the shoulder, and the violins give the signal for a trio. To an energetic phrase:

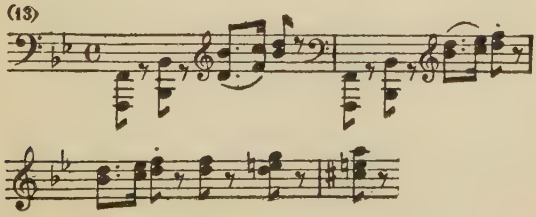


Leonora declares that her courage is equal to anything, Rocco congratulates her on her spirit, while Marcelline assures Fidelio that her love will console him when he comes back, sad at heart, from the cells. Within the set form imposed by the older style of ensemble, the varying feelings of the three characters are admirably expressed.

There is a beautiful touch at the finish of the trio. While Marcelline speaks of her own tears of happiness flowing at the thought of her union with Fidelio, Leonora speaks of the bitterness of *her* fears; and Beethoven gives the appropriate expression and colour to each phrase by the simple device of alternating a major with a minor interval:



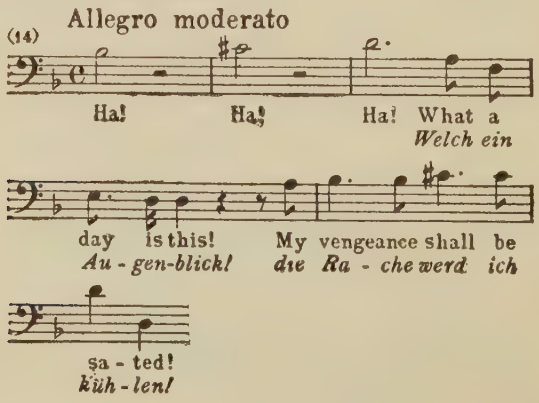
It is time, says Rocco, to take to the Governor the documents that Fidelio has brought from the town; but just then a march is heard:



signalising the coming of Pizarro. Leonora gives Rocco the little case containing the documents, and goes with Marcelline into the house.

The main gate is opened by guards; officers enter with a detachment of soldiers, Pizarro follows, and the gate is closed again. Pizarro gives his orders to the officers: there are to be three guards set on the ramparts, six men day and night to watch the drawbridge, as many to overlook the garden, and anyone who approaches the moat is to be brought before him at once. He takes the dispatches from Rocco and runs through them. The usual recommendations or complaints, he says; if he were to bother about all that, he would never finish. But he recognises the writing on the cover of one of the letters. Opening it, he goes to the foreground, Rocco and the guards withdrawing to the back.

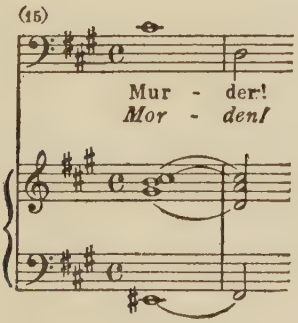
He reads the letter: "I have to inform you that the Minister has been told that the state prison under your charge contains several sacrifices to the caprice of power. He means to set out to-morrow and surprise you with an enquiry. Be on your guard." Ah! he says, if the Minister were to discover that in the prison is that Florestan whom he believes to have been long dead, that Florestan who thought of exposing Pizarro to the Minister, and on whom he has now wreaked his vengeance! He must act boldly and quickly. In a vigorous aria:



he pours out his hatred upon Florestan, who once almost achieved his ruin; but now his own hour of triumph is at hand. Softly, from the background, comes a chorus of the guards, who whisper to each other, " He speaks of death and wounds! Let us go on our round; this must be some affair of importance."

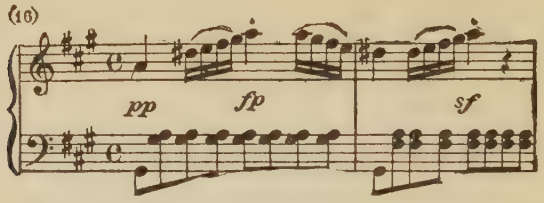
Resuming ordinary speech again after his aria, Pizarro makes vigorous preparations to secure his safety. Calling the captain, he tells him to mount to the tower with a trumpeter, not to take his eyes off the road from Seville, and as soon as he observes a coach with outriders approaching to see that the signal is given him. " At once, understand, at once! " he repeats; " you will be answerable to me with your head."

The captain goes without a word, and Pizarro imperiously orders the guards to follow him. Calling Rocco to him, he scrutinises him sternly for a while and then, deciding that the gaoler's help is necessary, throws him a purse and promises him he shall become a rich man if he does as he is told. " What must I do? " asks Rocco. " Murder! " replies Pizarro:

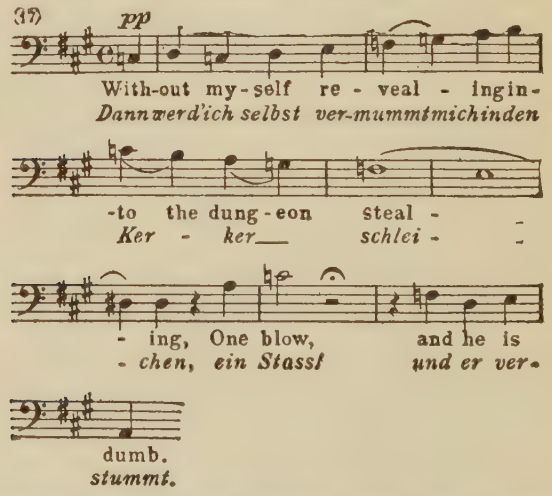


and Rocco shrinks back in horror. Pizarro becomes more urgent. Is he a man? he asks Rocco with a touch of contempt; if so, instead of trembling and babbling as he does he will see to it that, for the Governor's sake and for the safety of the State, a certain offender is put out of the way.

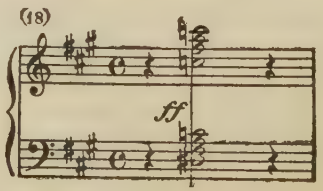
Sinister effects come out in the strings:



as Pizarro's blood-lust increases. Rocco, he says, must know the prisoner he means. "Is it the one," asks the gaoler, "who can hardly be said to be alive, for he is a mere shadow?" "It is he," replies Pizarro grimly. Rocco must set to at once and dig a grave in the cell; then he is to call Pizarro, who will enter masked; one blow, and the prisoner is silenced for ever:


(17)
pp
With-out my-self re - veal - ingin-
Dann werd'ich selbst ver-mummt mich inden
-to the dung-eon steal -
Ker - ker schlei -
- ing, One blow, and he is
- chen, ein Stass! und er ver-
dumb.
stummt.

A sinister effect is made by the bare octaves that accompany the phrase, the sudden fortissimo discord:

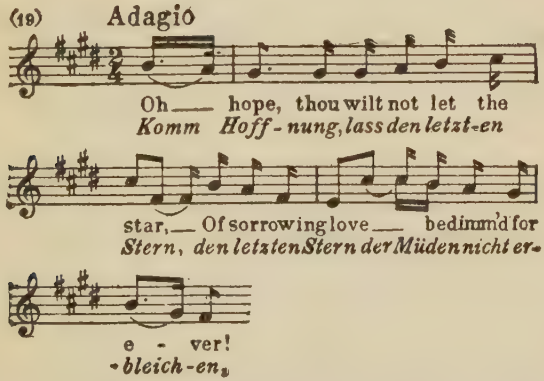


that precedes the words " One blow! " the silence that follows as Pizarro produces his dagger, and the pizzicato of the basses to the words, " and he is dumb! " While Pizarro continues to pour out his hatred on Florestan, the horrified Rocco thinks that after all death will be preferable to the life this unhappy prisoner is now living; the dagger will bring him release.

Pizarro goes into the garden, Rocco following him; when they have left the stage, Leonora comes on in the greatest agitation and breaks into the recitative of the famous aria, " Thou monstrous fiend! " " What would you? " she asks the absent Pizarro; " does the voice of humanity, the call of pity, no longer move your tiger's heart? " Yet the more his rage and hate foam like the waves of an angry sea, the more she is sure that through the dark clouds the rainbow will soon pierce; and Beethoven realistically suggests the waves by a rolling figure in the lower strings, and the rainbow by soft chords high up in the wood-wind.

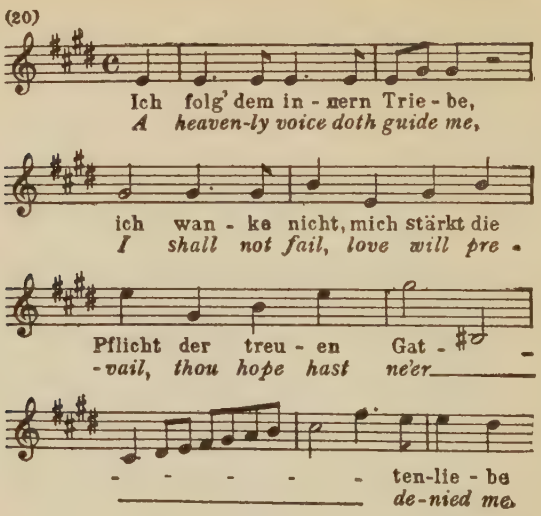
The theme of the adagio of the aria that follows is a cry to Hope to shed its last rays on her now in the hour of her deepest weariness:

(19) Adagio


Oh — hope, thou wilt not let the
Komm Hoff-nung, lass den letzt-en
star, — Of sorrowing love — bedimm'd for
Stern, den letzten Stern der Müden nicht er-
e - ver!
-bleich-en,

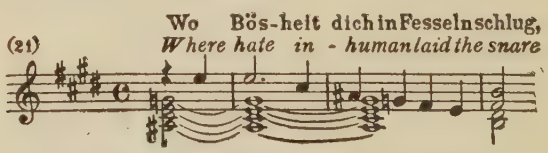
As the tempo changes to allegro, opening with a fanfare in the horns, the music takes on a more vigorous character as she speaks of her resolution to be strong for the sake of him she loves, him for whom she has already borne so much: the very stride of the intervals of the melody is eloquent of courage:

(20)


Ich folg' dem in - nern Trie - be,
A heaven-ly voice doth guide me,
ich wan - ke nicht, mich stärkt die
I shall not fail, love will pre -
Pflicht der treu - en Gat -
- vail, thou hope hast ne'er
- - - - - ten-lie - be
de-nied me.

As she speaks of the wickedness that has caught Florestan in its toils we hear again the dissonant diminished seventh that accompanied Pizarro's cry of "Murder!":

(21)



After a renewed expression of ecstatic faith in her mission she goes into the garden, and Marcelline enters from the house, followed by Jaquino. He is once more pressing his love on her, saying mournfully how well it was with them before this Fidelio came on the scene; and she infuriates him by her assurance that with him she had never been more than friendly, while she loves Fidelio deeply and intends to marry him. Rocco and Leonora return from the garden.

Rocco in kindly fashion warns Jaquino to think no more about Marcelline, while Leonora abruptly changes the subject. She has often begged Rocco, she says, to let the poor prisoners out to enjoy the garden, and always he has alternately promised and put

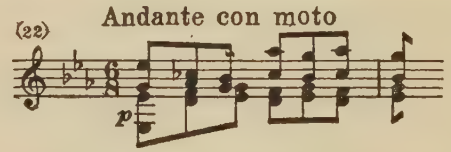
it off. To-day it is so beautiful, and the Governor is not likely to return: will he not grant her request now? He urges that he has not the Governor's permission; but Marcelline thinks perhaps her father can do Pizarro some service that will placate him. " Some service? " says Rocco. " You are right, Marcelline: I will risk it "; and he tells Jaquino and Fidelio to open the cells, while he himself goes to the Governor. He enters the garden, while Jaquino and Fidelio unbolt the prison doors.

There comes out slowly a pitiful crowd of wasted figures, some, scarcely able to walk, supported by others, all of them hardly capable at first of moving their cramped limbs, and shading their eyes from the unaccustomed light of the sun. In the famous Prisoners' Chorus they sing of their joy at escaping for a moment from their living tombs into the clear air of day: at one point an officer appears on the rampart, and huddling together they exhort each other to speak softly, for they are overlooked and overheard; the effect in the theatre is indescribably moving. The prisoners pass slowly off into the garden, followed by Jaquino and Marcelline.

Rocco, who has meanwhile returned, is asked by Leonora how he has fared with Pizarro. All has gone well, he replies: he has told the Governor of Fidelio's desire, and Pizarro has consented both that he shall marry Marcelline and help the gaoler — that very day, indeed, he shall descend with him into the lower cells. Leonora gives a great cry of joy.

They are to go at once, says Rocco, into the cell of that prisoner of whom they talked before. " Is he to be released, then? " asks Leonora. " No," answers Rocco with his finger on his mouth; he will indeed find release, but in the grave, and that grave Fidelio is to help him to dig. " He is dead, then? " says Leonora; and when Rocco replies, " Not yet! not yet! " she shrinks away from him in horror, asking, " Is it your duty, then, to kill him? " The gaoler assures her: " No, my good young friend, don't tremble like that; Rocco does not hire himself out as a murderer. The Governor himself will go down there; all we two have to do is to dig the grave." " Perhaps the grave of my husband," Leonora murmurs aside: " could anything be more terrible? "

Greatly as Rocco dislikes the job, it has to be done; the grave is to be made in the ruined cistern in the floor of Florestan's cell. He would gladly spare the shivering Fidelio this ordeal, but the task is too much for his own unaided strength. The later stages of the duet are carried out to the accompaniment of an expressive orchestral melody, commencing thus in the clarinets and bassoons:



It is one of the most effective passages in the whole score.

While Rocco is again offering to undertake the work alone, and Leonora is once more assuring him that her strength is equal to the trial, they are interrupted by Marcelline and Jaquino, who run in with the news that the officer has told the Governor of the liberty granted to the prisoners, and that he is coming thither in a fury.

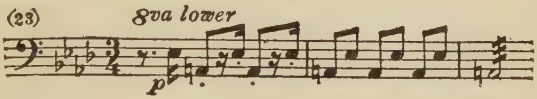
Rocco, comforting himself with the thought that, let the tyrant say what he will, he has done a good action, braces himself to meet the storm of Pizarro's wrath, which soon bursts over him. Rocco stammers out an excuse about the warmth and beauty of the spring day, and it being the name-day of the King; then he softly suggests that a little indulgence may without danger be granted to the other prisoners, seeing that the Governor's vengeance is about to fall crushingly on one of them. Pizarro, somewhat appeased by this reflection, bids him get on with the business of the grave, and gives orders that the prisoners are to be driven back. They come in from the garden, singing a pathetic farewell to the sunlight. Marcelline and Leonora secretly sympathise with them, and Leonora and Jaquino, having shepherded them all into the prison, bolt the doors of the cells. The music dies down and down, in an expressive diminuendo, to a few simple chords in the wood-wind and horns, which are clinched by a shudder in the kettledrums as the curtain falls.

The second act opens in Florestan's wretched cell, which is very

faintly lit by a lamp. In the ground on the left of the stage is a disused cistern, covered with stones and earth. In the background, through latticed openings in the wall, we see the steps of a staircase leading down from above to the door that gives access to the cell. Florestan is sitting on a stone seat; he is fettered to the wall by a long chain.

His misery and the gloom of the cell are graphically described in a fairly long orchestral introduction, in which the kettledrums again play an expressive part:

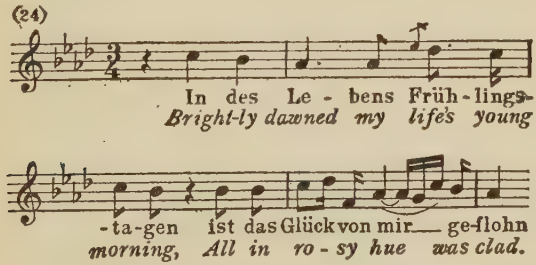
(23)



The opening words of Florestan's recitative, "Heaven! what darkness here! What silence full of horror!" have been severely criticised as a dramatic blunder on the part of the librettist; it is urged, and with reason, that as the prisoner has been in the cell for two years he is hardly likely to be commenting on its darkness and the silence at this juncture; the librettist has clearly forgotten this fact, and only remembers that it is we who are being shown the darkness and made conscious of the silence for the first time. The perception of this little blunder, however, does not make Florestan's cry any less moving to us. His trust, he says, is in Heaven, against whose will he does not murmur.

The opening strain of his aria:

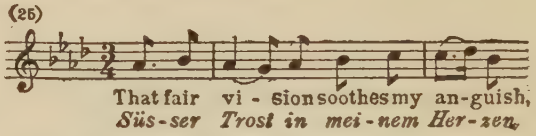
(24)


In des Le - bens Früh - lings-
Bright-ly dawned my life's young
-ta-gen ist das Glück von mir ge-flohn
morning, All in ro - sy hue was clad.

is one that will be familiar to those who have heard the *Leonora No. 3* overture in the concert-room. In the very bloom of his

youth, he says, happiness has fled from him; he dared to speak the truth, and these chains are his reward. But he bears his woes with patience, for soon his course will be run, and he is consoled by the thought that he did his duty:

(25)



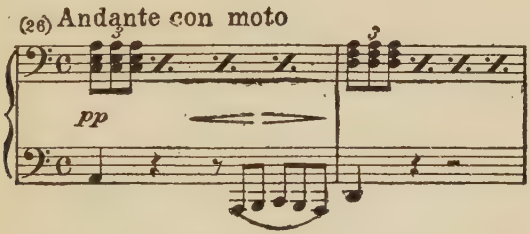
As the tempo merges from adagio into allegro an oboe melody steals upward over a throbbing accompaniment, and then plays like an aura round Florestan's melody, in which, in a kind of exaltation that, though it seems to border on frenzy, is touched throughout with a calm ecstasy, he speaks of the soft air that seems to murmur round him, and of the rosy vision in which he sees an angel coming to him and bringing him consolation — an angel in the form of Leonora, who leads him aloft to the freedom of heaven.

The rapture of the music dies away into a few soft harmonies, and as he sinks down exhausted on the stone seat, covering his face with his hands, we see in the background Rocco and Leonora descending the stairs outside. Beethoven has treated the scene that immediately follows in the form of " melodrama " — spoken dialogue interspersed with short descriptive orchestral passages, among which we hear again No. 22, as well as a snatch of oboe melody taken from Florestan's vision of the coming of Leonora.

Rocco and Leonora have with them, besides the apparatus for the grave-digging, a lantern and a pitcher of wine. They speak in undertones, Leonora especially being chilled to the heart by the cold and darkness of the vault. Rocco points out the sleeping prisoner, and Leonora tries in vain to catch a sight of his features. They must get to work quickly, says Rocco; and throwing down the bunch of keys that hangs at his belt and taking a mattock from the trembling Leonora he goes down to his waist in the cistern and begins to clear away the stones and earth from it.

Leonora all the while is trying to pick out the prisoner's features in the darkness.

The muted strings softly beat out a series of throbbing triplets, while underneath them a restless figure is given out in the gloomy tones of the double bassoon:



Against this sinister orchestral background Rocco and Leonora, both of them now working, converse in low tones. Leonora nerves herself for the ordeal, and swears that whoever the unhappy prisoner may be she will release him.

Rocco stops for a moment to refresh himself with a drink, and just then Florestan awakes and raises his head, but without turning it in their direction. Bidding Leonora take his place in the cistern, Rocco enters into conversation with Florestan. Has he been resting for a while? he asks; and when Florestan replies " Rest? How should I find rest? " Leonora is unable to recognise him with certainty from his voice alone. But when the prisoner turns his face to the gaoler to reproach him with his eternal indifference to his sufferings, Leonora knows at last that it is her husband, and she sinks almost unconscious on the edge of the grave.

Rocco tries to excuse himself: he only obeys the orders that are given him. Florestan asks him, as presumably he has done before, who is the Governor of this prison, and now Rocco thinks it safe to tell him it is Pizarro. Florestan repeats the name in horrified astonishment, and Leonora, raising herself gradually summons all her strength and courage. The following conversation ensues:

Florestan: " O send as soon as you can to Seville, and ask for Leonora Florestan — "

Leonora: "O God! he does not know that she herself is now digging his grave! "

Florestan: "Tell her I lie here in chains."

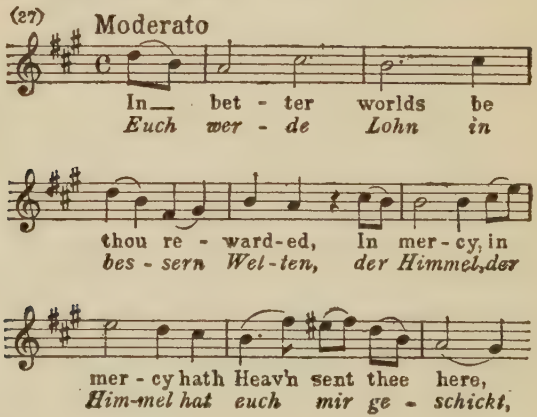
Rocco: "It is impossible, I tell you. I would only ruin myself, without having been able to help you."

Florestan: "Then if I am condemned to end my life here, let me at least not die thus by degrees."

Leonora (springing up and supporting herself by the wall): "O God, can this be borne? "

Florestan: "For pity's sake give me a drop of water. That is very little to ask of you."

Rocco, moved in spite of his profession, tells him that he cannot do that, but he will give him a drop of wine from his pitcher, which Leonora brings him at his bidding. Florestan looks at her and asks, "Who is this? " "My assistant, and in a few days my son-in-law," replies Rocco. He hands the pitcher to Florestan, who drinks it and thanks him:


(27)
Moderato
In bet - ter worlds be
Euch wer - de Lohn in
thou re - ward-ed, In mer - cy, in
bes - sern Wel - ten, der Himmel, der
mer - cy hath Heav'n sent thee here,
Him-mel hat euch mir ge - schickt,

This strain is developed into a trio, during which Leonora takes a crust of bread from her pocket and asks Rocco's permission to give it to Florestan. The gaoler, after a momentary refusal, consents; Leonora, deeply moved, offers the crust to Florestan, who seizes her hand and presses it to his breast with words of thanks, and then devours the bread.

The trio over, Rocco masters himself and remembers his duty. Going to the background and opening the door, he gives a whistle as signal to Pizarro. " Is that the omen of my death? " asks Florestan; and Leonora, in great agitation, replies, " No, no! Be calm, dear prisoner! " " O my Leonora! " he cried: " shall I never see thee again? " Leonora holds herself back with a mighty effort of self-control. " Be calm," she says insistently to him again; " do not forget that whatever you may see and hear, there is a God in heaven "; and she goes towards the cistern.

Pizarro enters, closely wrapped up in his cloak. In an assumed voice he asks Rocco if everything is ready, and being assured that it is, he tells Rocco to send his assistant away. Leonora moves to the background, and then creeps round in the shadow towards Florestan, all the while keeping her eyes on Pizarro. The latter mutters to himself that he must get rid of both his assistants that very day, so that no one may ever know of the murder.

Rocco asks him if he shall remove the prisoner's chains; he is told to release him only from the stone to which he is fettered. Drawing a dagger, Pizarro tells Florestan that his hour has come, but before he dies he shall know who it is that slays him. Throwing back his cloak he reveals himself as that Pizarro whom Florestan had tried to overthrow; and in his blood-lust he gloats over his victim, who, in answer to the Governor's cry, " Pizarro now stands before you as avenger! " calmly replies, " Before me stands a murderer! "

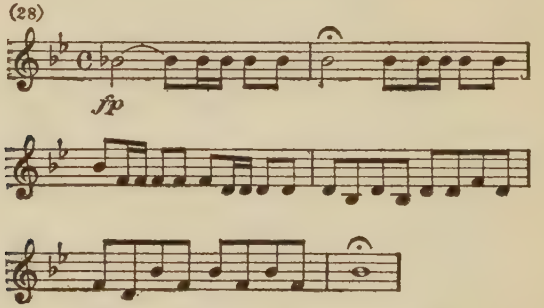
Pizarro raises the dagger and is about to throw himself on Florestan when Leonora gives a shriek, and, running forward, stands between the two men. Pizarro hurls her aside; returning, and once more throwing herself protectingly in front of Florestan, she cries, " Kill first his wife! " — a thrilling moment in the theatre, as the words ring out without any orchestral accompaniment.

The others ejaculate in astonishment, " His wife? " Turning to Florestan she cries, " Yes, I am Leonora! " Then, to the others, " I am his wife, I have sworn solace to him, and distruction to you! " Recovering himself, Pizarro sets himself to sweep this new danger from his path. He is about to stab both Florestan and

Leonora, when the latter draws a pistol from her doublet and, presenting it at him, cries, " Another word and you are dead! "

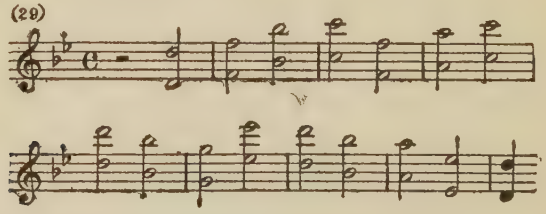
The situation is of itself dramatic enough, coming as it does after the long scene of doubts and fears and anguish that has led us up to it; but what immediately follows has hardly a parallel for effect in the whole range of opera. Just as Pizarro recoils from the pistol there is heard, behind the scenes, the trumpet-call:

(28)



that Pizarro had ordered to be given as the signal of the coming of the Minister. There is a fateful pause; then, as a great theme floats out in the flute and 'cellos:

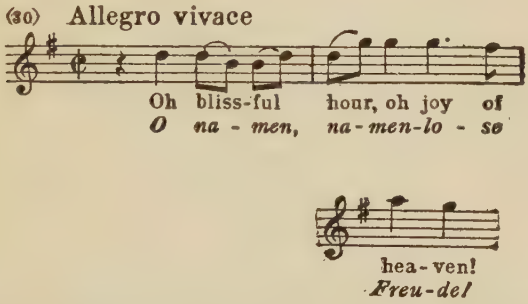
(29)



the four voices blend for a moment. Leonora, throwing her arms round her husband, cries, " God be thanked! Thou art saved! " Florestan echoes her words, while Rocco and Pizarro seem stunned.

The trumpet rings out its warning again, and Jaquino, followed by two officers and soldiers with torches, appears on the staircase and announces that the Minister is already at the gates of the prison. Rocco, greatly relieved at the turn events have taken, orders

the soldiers with the torches to come down and light the Governor out. The interrupted quartet is resumed, and at the end of it the frustrated Pizarro departs, leaving Florestan and Leonora, after a brief dialogue in which the former tells how she came from Seville and entered the prison service as a man, to express their joy in an eager, rapturous duet:



the melody of which is taken from an unfinished opera of Beethoven's youth.

[In the libretto, Rocco returns after the duet, congratulates (in spoken prose) the reunited pair, and tells them that the Minister has a list of all the prisoners, and has ordered Jaquino to bring them before him. Florestan's name alone is not on the list; he has evidently been a victim of the personal rancour of Pizarro. This episode is usually omitted in performance, the curtain falling on the duet.]

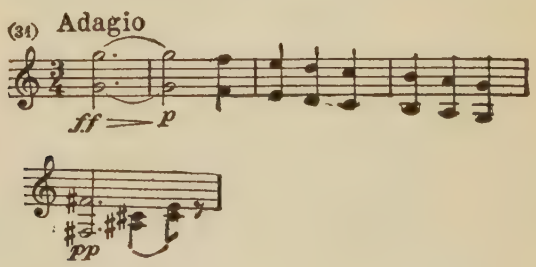
The final scene shows us the parade-ground of the prison, in which is a statue of the King. The guards march in and form an open square. They are followed, from one side, by the Minister (Don Fernando), Pizarro, officers, and a crowd of people; while from the other side come the prisoners, conducted by Jaquino and Marcelline.

The prisoners kneel before the Minister, whom both they and the people greet in a chorus of praise. He speaks to them of the good King's clemency and sense of justice. Rocco pushes his way through the crowd, accompanied by Florestan (still in chains) and

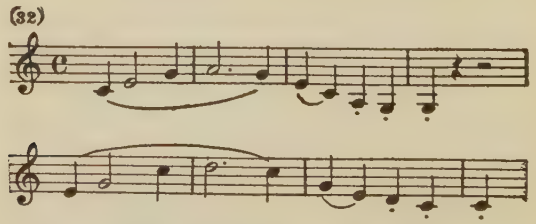
Leonora, at the sight of whom Pizarro gives an ejaculation of angry dismay, while Don Fernando is astonished to see again his friend Florestan, whom he had thought dead, and his wife Leonora in a man's costume.

In spite of Pizarro's protests he insists on hearing the whole story. Pizarro tries desperately to involve Rocco in his crime, but the gaoler has no difficulty in exculpating himself. At the command of the Governor, Pizarro is led away by the guards, Leonora unlocks the fetters of Florestan, who falls in her arms, and the opera ends with general rejoicing and a chorus in praise of the constancy of woman in general and of Leonora in particular.

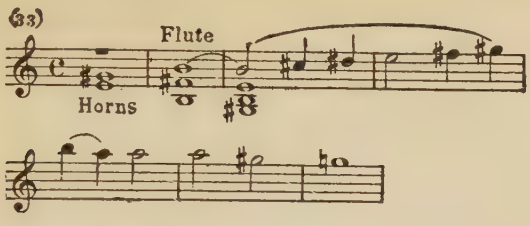
The great *Leonora No. 3* overture commences with an adagio introduction in which, after an arresting unison phrase:



the wood-wind gives out the theme of Florestan's song in prison (No. 24). The anguish and the hopes and the heavenly vision of the prisoner are painted in the remainder of the adagio, and with the coming of the mighty theme of the allegro:



we seem to see Leonora hastening to the rescue. This theme is worked out at length in connection with another:



and is followed by the trumpet-call behind the scene (No. 28), which is succeeded, as in the opera, by the long-drawn No. 29. Another long development ensues, till we come to a rushing mighty wind in the strings, heralding a presto coda that is a great cry of triumph and joy, with the Leonora theme (No. 32) dominant at the end.

This colossal overture, the greatest thing of its kind ever written, is sometimes played between the first and second acts. The disadvantage of this plan is that by anticipating the trumpet-call the effect of this in the succeeding scene is diminished. Sometimes the overture is given between the prison scene and the finale; and in this case we feel that something of the thrill that the trumpet-call always gives us in the concert-room is now lost, because we have already heard it in its proper place in the opera.

GIOACCHINO ROSSINI

GIOACCHINO ROSSINI was born at Pesaro on the 29th February, 1792. His father, Giuseppe, the town trumpeter, got into trouble with his compatriots in 1796, owing to his sympathies with the French republicans, and had to find a new means of livelihood. His wife, though illiterate, had voice enough to get engagements as an opera singer; Giuseppe played the horn in the orchestra; and occasionally Gioacchino helped, either with his voice (until it broke) or as accompanist.

As a child he had been taught the rudiments of music, and in his early teens he entered the Bologna Conservatoire, where he received such musical education as was usual in the Italy of that time. He already realised his own marvellous facility, and had no great appetite for severe study. Through an influential friend he received his first operatic commission in 1810, when he produced *La Cambiale di Matrimonio* ("The Matrimonial Market") at Venice. Other commissions soon followed, and he won a big success with *La Pietra del Paragone* ("The Touchstone") at Milan in 1812. *Tancredi* and *L'Italiana in Algieri* followed in 1813, and *Il Turco in Italia* in 1814. In 1815 he made the acquaintance of Barbaja, the Naples impresario, who engaged him as his musical director, with the obligation of writing two operas a year; the first, *Elisabetta, Regina d'Inghilterra,* was a great success.

The year 1816 saw the production in Rome of the *Barber of Seville* (5th February), which, after an inauspicious first performance, soon became enormously popular. Rossini returned to Naples to work out his contract with Barbaja. *Otello,* the third

act of which was for many years regarded in many quarters as the high-water mark of European operatic composition, was given on the 4th December, 1816. *La Cenerentola* ("Cinderella") was produced in Rome on the 25th January, 1817, and *La Gazza Ladra* ("The Thieving Magpie") at Milan on the 30th May. Rossini had now written fifteen operas in four years, while his total output for the eight years 1815–23 was twenty. He continued to fluctuate between serious and comic opera and oratorio. *Mosè in Egitto* was given at Naples in 1818, and *Semiramide* at Venice in 1823.

Long before this latter year his fame had spread all over Europe, and on the termination of his Naples engagement in 1821 he accepted an invitation to go to Vienna and produce his *Zelmira*. He remained six months in the Austrian capital, where, apart from his triumphs in the theatre, his wit and charm of manner made him highly popular in society. He heard the Eroica Symphony, was overwhelmed by it, and sought and obtained an introduction to Beethoven; but little was said at the interview, owing partly to Beethoven's deafness, partly to the fact that neither of them understood very much of the language of the other.

In 1823 Rossini went to Paris, then to London, then (after a visit to Italy) to Paris again, where he was made Director of the Italian Opera, a post which he held for about two years. For Paris he wrote *Le Comte Ory* (1828) and *Guillaume Tell* (1829). Though he was then no more than thirty-seven years old, and he had still nearly forty years of his life before him, he wrote no more operas. He still wrote small works for the church and the salon, and one large one, the *Stabat Mater* (Paris, January 1842).

In the years immediately following the production of *Guillaume Tell* he travelled a good deal, finally settling at Bologna, where he took an amount of trouble that was quite exceptional with him over the reform of the Conservatoire. He had always lived well rather than wisely, and about this time his health began to fail, his chief ailments being stone and neurasthenia. In May 1843, after suffering for many years, he underwent an operation in Paris that

restored him to health for a time. When it failed again, he left Bologna finally for Paris (in the spring of 1855); the change of air and a hydropathic treatment benefited him greatly, and for the next twelve years his health on the whole was good.

His first wife was Isabella Colbran, who had been both the leading prima donna and the mistress of Barbaja of Naples. Rossini separated from her in 1837, and she died in October 1845; in August 1846 he married Olympe Pélissier, who had already cared for him for some ten years.

The town of Paris presented him with a plot of land in Passy, on which he built himself a house, and his remaining years were spent between this and his apartment in Paris. He continued to write innumerable little pieces for himself and for his friends' albums: some of these have been pieced together in our own day to make the Russian ballet *Le Boutique Fantasque*. On the 12th February, 1868, *Guillaume Tell* was given for the five hundredth time at the Paris Opera, and the occasion was made the pretext for a general act of homage to him; he was serenaded in his Paris apartment by the Opera orchestra, chorus, and some of the soloists. He died of pneumonia at Passy on the 13th November, 1868.

Rossini was an inveterate joker, and the stories told of his wit and humour are almost innumerable. One of the best is in connection with an early opera of his, *Il Figlio per Azzardo*. The story goes that as he did not like the libretto, which had been forced on him by the impresario, Rossini revenged himself by turning the whole thing into nonsense — in each bar of the overture the second violins had to strike the lamp-shade with their bows, the bass part was written absurdly high, the soprano part absurdly low, and so on. No doubt there was some fun at the time, but one suspects that the joke was largely worked up by Rossini in conversation in later years. The score as we now have it hardly bears out the details. A revised version of the opera, under the title of *Il Signor Bruschino*, was produced at Paris in 1858. It is one of the best of Rossini's less-known works.

He was said to have made ironical and somewhat malicious

comments on Wagner, but Rossini indignantly denied having uttered them. The two men met in 1860, and in an interesting article on Rossini written after the latter's death, Wagner spoke of him as "the first truly great and reverable man I had as yet met in the world of art."

THE French dramatist to whom we owe the original texts of *The Barber of Seville* and *The Marriage of Figaro* was one of the most remarkable products of the eighteenth century. His real name was Pierre Augustin Caron. He was born at Paris on the 24th January, 1732, and being the son of a watchmaker he himself graduated in that trade. In his early twenties he managed to secure a post in the King's household, where he taught the harp to the daughters of Louis XIV. In 1761 he purchased the title of Secretary to the King, and with it a patent of nobility, in virtue of which he called himself in future Caron de Beaumarchais.

The upstart was regarded with none too favourable an eye by some exclusive members of the genuine aristocracy, but his unfailing wit and assurance — not to say impudence — carried him triumphantly through most of his little encounters with them. In addition to his literary activities he dabbled in trade and speculation during a great part of his life, making large sums and not infrequently losing them again; during the war of the French colonies with England he supplied arms to the United States, and became the creditor of the new country for large amounts which were never paid him, though his family received, thirty-six years after his death, 800,000 out of the 2,280,000 francs that were admitted to be owing to him. In 1764 he went to Spain to champion the cause of one of his sisters who had been jilted by a Spaniard names Clavigo. Out of his experiences in this affair he made his first play, *Eugénie* (1767).

He was twice married, in 1757 and in 1768, in each case to a

widow, in the first case being left a widower after a year of marriage, in the second after two years. In 1770 he became involved in one of the most famous lawsuits of the eighteenth century. A certain Comte de la Blache accused him of fraud in connection with the business affairs of his uncle, an old banker, and claimed from him 139,000 livres. Beaumarchais fought the case, both in the courts and in the Press, with infinite wit and ingenuity. The first verdict went against him; he appealed, and won, but lost a third trial and found himself, for a time, practically ruined.

His comedy *The Barber of Seville* appeared in 1775, and was a tremendous success. He wrote *The Marriage of Figaro* shortly afterwards, but it was not performed until 1784. In 1787 he produced a curious opera *Tarare,* the fruit of certain theories he had upon the new possibilities of this genre; it was set to music by Mozart's rival in Vienna, Salieri. After living for some time in magnificent style in a great house in Paris, he was ruined by the revolution, and at one time was actually in prison. He died in 1799.

In view of the uses to which musicians later put the two great comedies, it is interesting to recall that Beaumarchais himself originally planned *The Barber of Seville* (in 1772) as a sort of opera in four acts, the music in the sung portions being mostly from Spanish folk-songs. One of his friends, the Prince de Conti, told Beaumarchais that he thought the preface gayer than the play itself, and advised him to remodel the latter and make a comedy of it. In this form it was first produced in 1775. The work, by the way, had been refused by the Comédie Italienne; the chief actor at that establishment, Clairval, had himself once been a barber, and the Parisian wits could have been trusted to take full advantage of the opportunity this would have afforded them had he played the Barber's part.

Figaro was apparently not set to music until Mozart took up the subject in 1786. But *The Barber of Seville* had been set ten years before this by the Italian Paisiello (1741–1816) — almost immediately, as will be seen, after the publication of the play. This previous opera on the subject proved a bit of an embarrassment

to Rossini. It is probable, indeed, that the subject was no choice of his own, but was forced upon him by the Roman impresario. This gentleman had latterly been having a good deal of trouble with the local police, who refused him permission to stage one subject after another because it was held to be dangerous in the political state of Italy at that time. Finally the distracted impresario suggested Beaumarchais' comedy; and the Roman Governor seems to have fallen in with the proposal out of sheer fatigue with the whole bothering business. Besides, as the subject had already been set by Paisiello, it was presumably harmless.

Rossini, however, appears not to have been particularly pleased at the impresario's choice. He knew the passion of the Italians for taking sides, and the general estimation in which the venerable Paisiello was held; and he foresaw trouble for his own opera. To put himself in the right in advance, he wrote to Paisiello advising him courteously of his intention to set the *Barber*. The old composer replied to the young one in a letter that was a blend of politeness and irony. He had not been particularly pleased at the success of Rossini's *Elisabetta* in Naples, and no doubt already had the suspicion that a dangerous new star had come above the Italian opera horizon. But he maintained the courtesies of the polite world; he told the young man, with mock gravity, that it gave him much pleasure to approve of the choice of the Roman papal police. No doubt he hoped that the work of the presumptuous new-comer would be a failure.

Rossini astutely saw to it that the contents of Paisiello's letter became known all over Rome, and in addition he introduced the libretto with a note in which he expressed his respectful admiration for the old public favourite. He thought it prudent also to give his own work the title not of *The Barber of Seville,* but of *Almaviva, or the Vain Precaution.*

His wary diplomacy, however, was not of much avail with the Roman public. The opera had a stormy reception at its first performance on the 6th February, 1816. A number of malcontents regarded it as an impertinence on Rossini's part that he

should have set the text at all after Paisiello; others were outraged by the novelty of some of Rossini's proceedings — for it must be remembered that in his day the young Rossini was regarded as an audacious musical innovator, almost a red revolutionary. Altogether they found the new *Barber* rather disturbing.

The partisan audience was only too delighted when, in addition to the many things that outraged its æsthetic sensibilities, something happened to provoke laughter. At one point in one of Almaviva's arias a string of his guitar snapped; at another, a cat that was not in the cast strolled across the stage; at another, Basilio became entangled in his robe; and each contretemps of this kind was an occasion for joyous hissing and hooting. Rossini, who conducted at the first performance, was so upset by the attitude of the audience that he left the theatre as soon as he could, and many years after he told Wagner that he feared he was going to be assassinated. But the next night the audience gave the opera a fair hearing, and at the third performance the success of the new work was assured.

It seems almost incredible that a work of this size could have been written in thirteen days, as is alleged, yet the dates confirm the story. Rossini's facility, indeed, was so great that had he really been put to it he could probably have finished the work in a day or two less. When Donizetti was told that the opera had been written in thirteen days, " Yes," he said, " but then Rossini always was a lazy fellow! "

Rossini, it is true, saved himself a little trouble here and there by using up material from his older works. The original overture has disappeared; but in the library of the Paris Conservatoire there is a manuscript score of the opera with an overture that is identical with that used by Rossini for two other operas of his — *Il Turco in Italia* and *Sigismondo;* and it is a fair presumption that this was the overture heard at the first performance of the *Barber*. The sprightly overture which is now published and played with the opera is really that to *Elizabetta;* and Rossini had already used this in two earlier works, *L'Equivoco stravagante* (1811) and *Aureliano in Palmira* (1814). There were other

borrowings from others of his works, which we shall note in the appropriate places.

It was quite a common thing in the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth for an opera composer to economise his labours by drawing upon earlier works that had not succeeded in establishing themselves; he probably did not see why a good thing should be lost to the world merely because the world had not had the good sense to take it to its heart at once. It is amusing to read that the Roman audience of 1816 found in the borrowed *Elisabetta* overture a summary of *The Barber of Seville;* they persuaded themselves that in one part they could hear the scoldings of old Bartolo, in another the lamentations of Rosina, and so on.

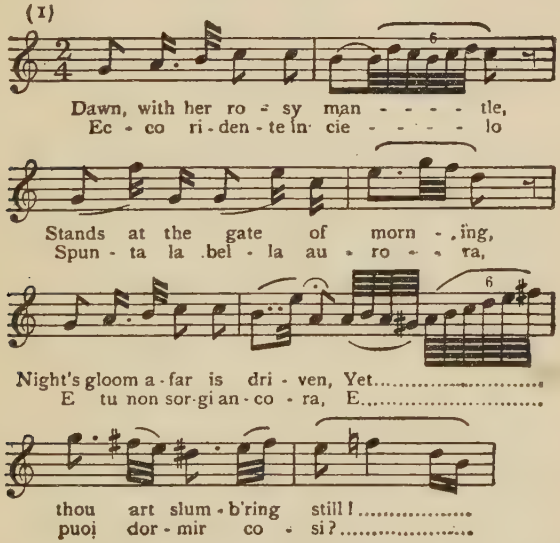
Rossini, who always took the gayest possible view of every situation, told Wagner, many years after, that for the score of the *Barber* he was paid twelve hundred francs, plus a nut-coloured coat with gold buttons, of which the impresario made him a present in order that he might be able to cut a decent figure in the theatre. The coat Rossini valued at a hundred francs — total thirteen hundred francs; and as the composition had taken him only thirteen days, this was at the liberal payment of a hundred francs a day. " So you see," he said, " that I was really getting quite a big wage. I swaggered about it before my father, who, when he was the public trumpeter at Pesaro, was paid only two francs fifty centimes a day."

ACT I

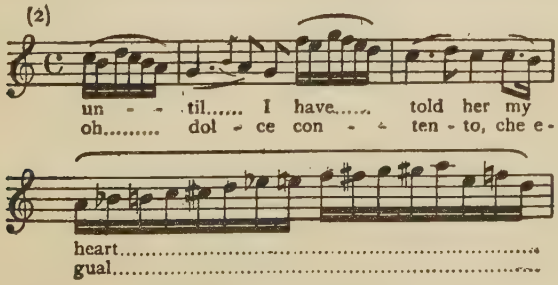
The first act shows an open square in Seville. On the left is the house of Doctor Bartolo, the old guardian of the fair Rosina; as he hopes to marry the young lady himself he keeps her as secluded as possible, and at present the windows are barred and the blinds drawn. It is early morning.

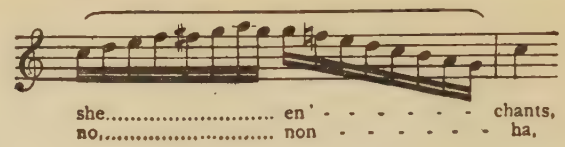
Count Almaviva, a rich young Spanish nobleman, has come with a band of musicians to offer Rosina an aubade; but for the moment he himself is not visible. The musicians are led in by his

servant Fiorello; all make a great point of secrecy and quietness, and keep on singing "Softly, softly," no more loudly than the exigencies of opera call for. Count Almaviva appears, learns from Fiorello that everything is ready for the aubade, and, while the musicians are tuning their instruments, breaks out into an aria in which he exhorts the slumbering fair one to rise and graciously allow the dawn to set about its normal business. The music is very florid; a faint idea of its technical difficulty can be gathered from the opening bars:


(1)
Dawn, with her ro - sy man - - - - tle,
Ec - co ri - den - te in cie - - - - lo
Stands at the gate of morn - ing,
Spun - ta la bel - la au - ro - ra,
Night's gloom a - far is dri - ven, Yet.....
E tu non sor-gi an - co - ra, E.....
thou art slum - b'ring still!.....
puoi dor - mir co - si?.....

and from the following passage taken from the middle section:



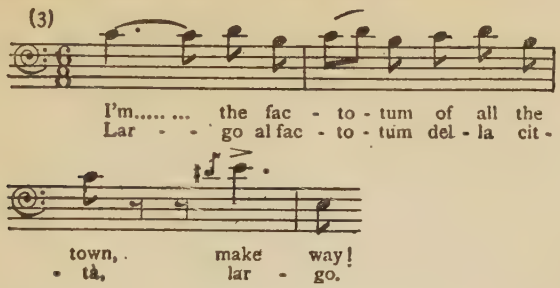


This aria, by the way, was added to the score after the first performance; Rossini adapted it from a chorus in an earlier oratorio of his, *Ciro in Babilonia* (*Cyrus in Babylon*).

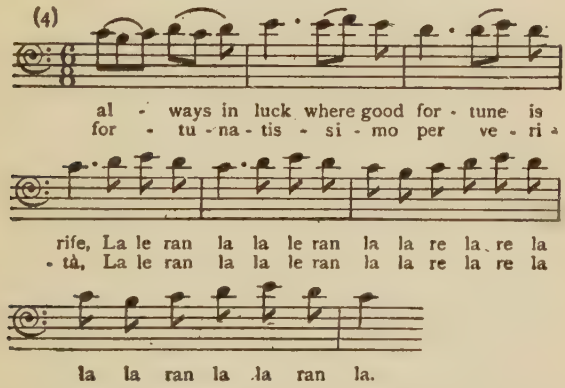
Almaviva fancies he sees Rosina at the window, but Fiorello, whose eye is not affected by love, assures him he is mistaken; meanwhile the morning is advancing, and it would be prudent, he thinks, to get rid of the musicians. The Count is far too much of a grandee to come into personal contact with these hirelings; he hands his purse to Fiorello, who in turn distributes the money to the musicians. This he does on such a liberal scale that instead of going off promptly they take quite a considerable time kissing the hands and the cloak of the Count and bowing to him, meanwhile expressing their humble thanks in a chorus which runs to such length that, after many vain attempts to persuade them to retire, the Count is reduced to driving them away.

The Count now bids Fiorello also leave him. Each morning he has seen Rosina at her window, and he assumes that she has also seen him, in which case she can hardly doubt that it is love for her that has brought him here. His intentions, he assures us, are strictly honourable; he intends to marry the lady. While he is indulging in these reflections a voice is heard without, singing a gay "La, la, la." The Count, who does not wish to be detected, hides under some arches — for it is now daylight — in order to observe the new-comer.

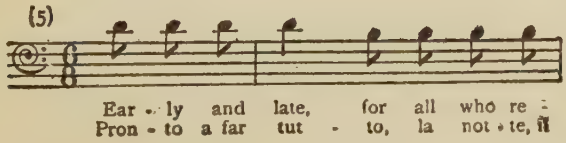
A riotously merry strain (No. 3) breaks out in the orchestra, and Figaro trips in, still singing his joyous "La, la, la!" Suspended from his neck is a guitar. He is full of the sense of his own importance. "Make way," he cries, "for the factotum of all the town!":

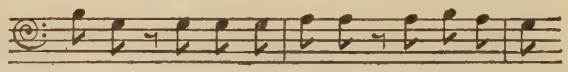


Morning has come, and everybody must be off to his business. What a pleasant life is that of the barber — a barber such as he — a barber of quality! He is the most fortunate of men, for he is everywhere in demand:


(4)
al - ways in luck where good for - tune is
for - tu - na - tis - si - mo per ve - ri -
rife, La le ran la la le ran la la re la re la
- tà, La le ran la la le ran la la re la re la
la la ran la la ran la.

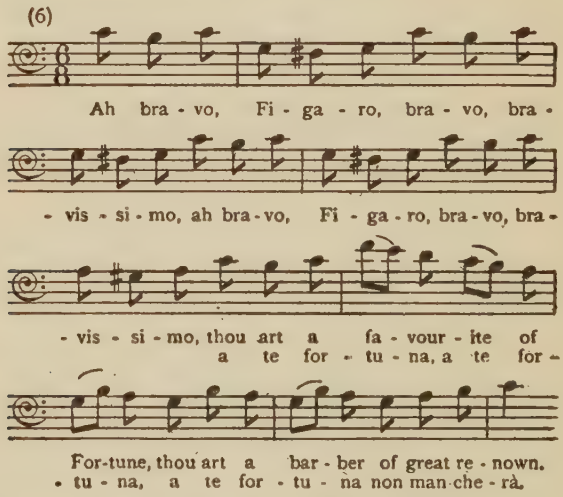
There is no profession in all the world, indeed, to compare with that of such a barber as he, for besides his services with scissors and razor he is the confidential adviser of all sorts of people, cavaliers and ladies alike:





In such request is he that he gets no rest, either day or night; one man calls for his wig, another to be shaved; another wishes to be bled, another sends him off with a billet-doux. The multiplicity of their cries distracts him; one at a time, he begs them, for pity's sake — " Here I am; Figaro here, Figaro there, ready, aye, super-ready, as quick as lightning." For all that he counts himself the most fortunate of mankind:

(6)


Ah bra - vo, Fi - ga - ro, bra - vo, bra -
- vis - si - mo, ah bra - vo, Fi - ga - ro, bra - vo, bra -
- vis - si - mo, thou art a fa - vour - ite of
a te for - tu - na, a te for -
For-tune, thou art a bar - ber of great re - nown.
- tu - na, a te for - tu - na non man - che - rà.

The aria is the finest specimen in existence of the Italian humorous bass aria — a genre that was in great vogue in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when Italian basses were expected to have almost the vocal agility of sopranos. It need hardly be said that the " Largo al factotum " can be taken at its proper pace only in Italian, with its large proportion of vowels to consonants.

Still full of his own importance, even after he has finished his superb aria, the bright fellow goes on to tell us further in a recita-

tive how much in demand he is; it is a subject on which, we feel, he could discourse for ever. Life is glorious, he says, when one is as famous as he is: without him not a girl in Seville could find a husband; to him comes the little widow who would like to be married again. And it is all so easy, for what with his comb and his razor by day, and his guitar at night, he is admitted everywhere.

By this time it has struck the Count that the features of this breezy new-comer are familiar to him, while it occurs to Figaro also that he has seen the Count somewhere. They recognise each other, and the Count, who is in the town incognito, and wants to remain so — for reasons that so intelligent a person as Figaro will grasp at once — asks the barber to be careful how he addresses him before others; no "Your Excellency" or anything of that kind! He sees that Figaro can be very useful to him in his enterprise with Rosina; and he tells him how one evening on the Prado he saw a lovely girl, the daughter, as he thinks, of a certain senile doctor, and fell in love with her. He now spends his days and nights under her window, hoping for a sign of recognition. "That window? And a doctor?" says Figaro. "How lucky!"

The Fates are indeed on the side of the Count; as Figaro puts it in his own picturesque language, the cheese has dropped right on to the macaroni! For in that very house is not he, Figaro, barber, coiffeur, surgeon, herbalist, druggist, vet, and confidential man in general? Moreover, the young lady is not the Doctor's daughter, but only his ward.

Just then the balcony window opens, and Figaro retires under the portico. Rosina is seen on the balcony. She has come out hoping and expecting to see the young man who has been following her for days; in fact, she has a letter for him. But old Bartolo appears most inopportunely. "What is that paper?" he asks. "Oh, nothing," says Rosina; "merely the words of an aria taken from the new opera, *The Vain Precaution*." The Count, hidden in the street below, chuckles over her wit, and Figaro, who is a connoisseur in these matters, slips in a quiet word of praise of Rosina's guile. She lets the letter fall, and, pretending that this

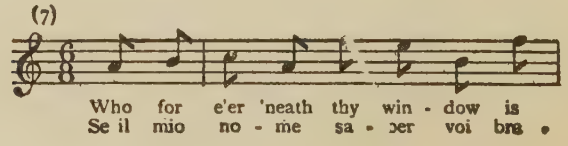
was an accident, sends Bartolo out to retrieve it; meanwhile the Count has picked it up and again hidden himself.

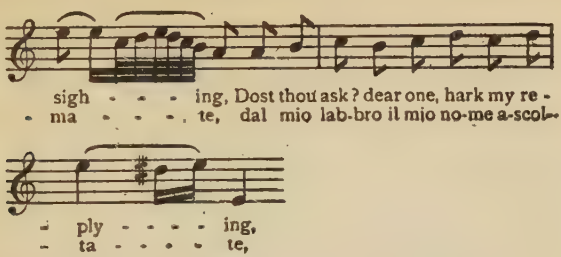
Bartolo, unable to find the letter, is not satisfied with Rosina's innocent explanation that the wind must have carried it away. His suspicions are aroused; he orders her in, and threatens to have the balcony walled up on the morrow. Rosina goes indoors, and the Count and Figaro read the letter, which runs thus: "Your assiduous attentions have excited my curiosity. My guardian is just going out; as soon as he is out of the way, find some ingenious means of letting me know your name, your position, and your intentions. I can never appear on the balcony without my tyrant following me; but be sure that everything that it is possible to do will be done to break her chains by the unfortunate Rosina."

While Figaro, in answer to the Count's enquiry, is explaining that this tyrannical guardian is a suspicious and grumbling old miser who hopes both to marry Rosina and to secure her money, the Doctor himself comes out. He calls out to Rosina, within, that not a soul is to be admitted but Don Basilio, who, should he call, is to be kept waiting. He locks the door from the outside and goes off, muttering that he must see to this marriage of his at once. This is too much for the Count, who has caught Bartolo's last words. Who is Basilio? he asks Figaro. Basilio, replies the barber, is hand-in-glove with Bartolo. He is a person very much down at heel, a hypocrite, a born intriguer, and a cunning match-maker; at present his duty in the house is to teach Rosina music.

The Count and Figaro work out a plan of campaign. For the present Rosina is not to know the Count's name or rank; he would first learn whether she loves him for his own sake. Figaro sees Rosina behind the curtain, and exhorts the Count to take the first step towards her affections by singing her a ballad. This he does, and under cover of a charming song:

(7)

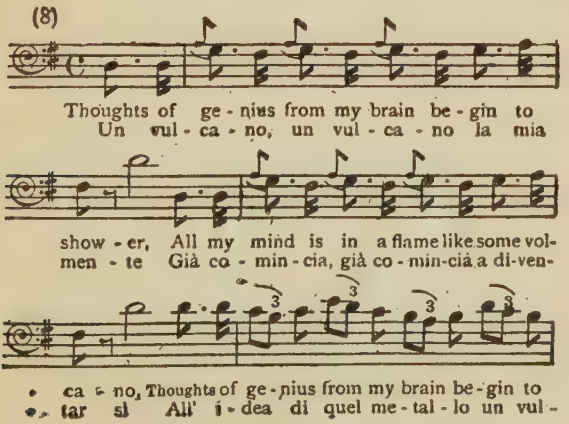


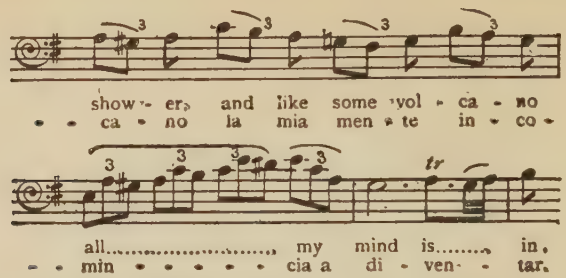


conveys to her that his name is Lindoro, and that he faithfully adores her. The naïve pun runs more smoothly in the Italian:

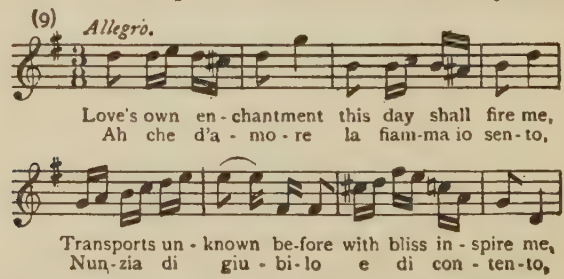
"Io son Lindoro
Che fido v'adoro."

Rosina finds the song and the sentiments so much to her taste that she begs him to go on, which the Count does, with a second stanza in which he tells her that Lindoro can offer her no treasure, but only a heart full of sincere love. Rosina has just begun to reply to him when she disappears from the balcony, evidently having been interrupted from inside the house. The Count impatiently declares that he must see her at once or he will go crazy; Figaro must come to his aid; let him put his boasted wits to work and find a means to introduce him into the Doctor's house. The Count promises him all the money he will require, and Figaro breaks out into a song in praise of gold as the source of all inventiveness:


(8)
Thoughts of ge - nius from my brain be - gin to
Un vul - ca - no, un vul - ca - no la mia
show - er, All my mind is in a flame like some vol-
men - te Già co - min - cia, già co - min-cia a di-ven-
3
ca - no, Thoughts of ge - nius from my brain be - gin to
tar si All' i - dea di quel me - tal - lo un vul -



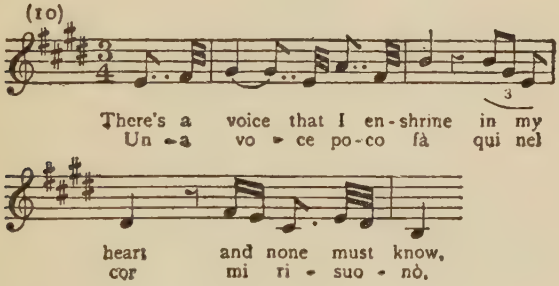
After a little cogitation, Figaro decides that the best way for the Count to gain access to Bartolo's house will be in the disguise of a soldier; a regiment is expected in the town that very day, and it will be easy for the Count to pretend that he has been quartered upon the Doctor. The pair express their delight at this happy idea in a duet based on the rollicking second part of No. 8. But the gold has not yet finished its beneficent work in Figaro's fertile brain. Another idea has occurred to him: the Count, in addition to being a soldier, had better pretend to be drunk, for who would suspect a spy in a drunken man? The suggestion appeals to the Count, and once more they give vent to their joy to the same strain as before. "But where," asks the Count, "can I find you when I want you?" Figaro gives him, at great length, his address in a sprightly aria, in which he tells him that he lives at No. 15 on the left, four steps up, the door with a white band; five wigs hang in the window, and there is an advertisement of a wonderful pomade. The Count expresses his satisfaction in a jubilant song:


(9)
Allegro.
Love's own en - chantment this day shall fire me,
Ah che d'a - mo - re la fiam-ma io sen - to,
Transports un - known be-fore with bliss in - spire me,
Nun-zia di giu - bi - lo e di con - ten - to,

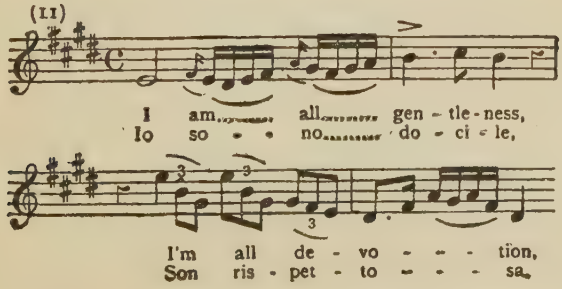
throughout which Figaro keeps interjecting more directions as to his address, and expressions of his delight at the shower

of gold that is going to descend on him. At the conclusion of the duet Figaro enters Bartolo's house, and the Count goes off.

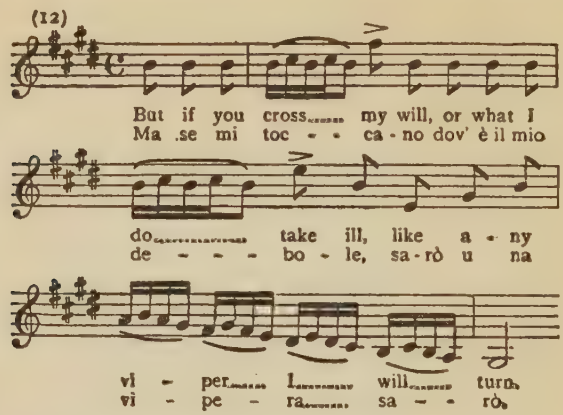
The scene changes to a room in Bartolo's house, the windows of which are closed with venetian blinds. Rosina is there, holding a letter in her hand. A few preliminary bars in the orchestra depict the flutterings of her little heart; then she breaks into the famous aria " Una voce poco fà," that is so beloved by every prima donna:



(The opening words of the aria are, in a rough translation, " A little while ago a voice resounded in my heart: my heart is already touched, and it was Lindoro who dealt it the blow.") She assures the absent Lindoro that she will marry nobody but him. Then she proceeds ingenuously to describe her own charming qualities: she is respectful, obedient, affectionate, easily ruled — so long, of course, as nobody crosses her will, when she turns into a viper:



When this happens she will stop at nothing to get her own way:

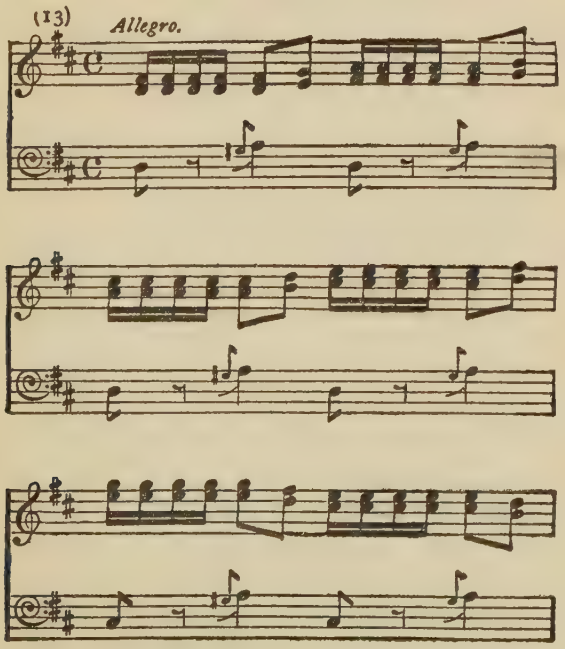

(12)
But if you cross my will, or what I
Ma se mi toc - ca - no dov' è il mio
do take ill, like a - ny
de - - - bo - le, sa - rò u na
vi - per I will turn
vi - pe - ra sa - - rò

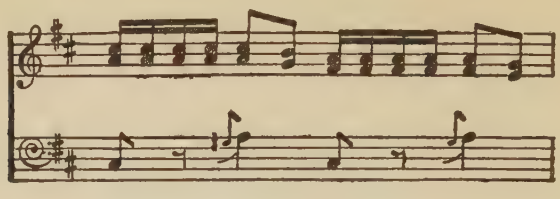
The aria is extremely difficult, and is therefore in great favour with prime donne; but in spite of the florid character of the writing, which on the surface seems intended only to give opportunities for vocal display, it is a perfect expression of the character of Rosina. It is evident from the words that it should be sung only by coloratura sopranos who can suggest not only to the ear but to the eye a kittenish creature of sixteen — which is Rosina's age in the opera.

The aria over, she has just come to the conclusion that she will give the letter, which she now seals, to Figaro to take to Lindoro, when the barber most opportunely enters. Figaro, for his part, has a message for her; but before he can deliver it, Bartolo is heard returning, and Figaro hides, while Rosina retires. Bartolo comes in cursing Figaro for a scoundrel, for with his medicines he has upset the whole house since morning. He calls in his servants Berta and Ambrogio, and tries to pump them to discover if the barber has been talking to Rosina; but he can get no sense out of either of them, for Berta has been given something that keeps her sneezing all the time, while Ambrogio has had a narcotic and can do nothing but yawn.

Basilio now enters. Bartolo tells him that he means to speed

matters up and marry Rosina the next day; but Basilio has a secret for him — he has seen the great Count Almaviva lurking in the neighbourhood. They at once conclude that this must be the unknown who has been dangling round after Rosina. The crafty Basilio has a sovereign plan for getting rid of the Count — calumny, which, skilfully employed, can always be trusted to bring the strongest down! He explains his meaning to Bartolo in the celebrated "Calumny" aria, in which he describes how, in the mouth of a master, detraction begins with a whisper so faint as to be hardly noticeable, then swells to a zephyr, then to a gale that destroys the victim. The aria is a masterpiece of characterisation; the gradual swelling of the chorus of calumny from a breath to a devastating hurricane is represented by a long crescendo in the orchestra, the following phrase being repeated again and again, starting *piano* and rising to a huge *fortissimo:*





And yet, appropriate as the music is to the words, it is really another of Rossini's borrowings from his early operas: it is adapted from the *Sigismondo* of 1815.

Good, they will employ calumny when necessary, says Bartolo; but meanwhile time presses. The first thing to do is to draw up the marriage contract; when once he is Rosina's husband he will know how to put a stop to her flirtations. The pair go out, and Figaro and Rosina come forward. The barber tells her of the plan that is afoot, and Rosina assures him that Bartolo will have his hands more than full with her. Figaro tells her of a cousin of his, a handsome young man, just completing his studies, who has fallen in love with her; and he discloses his scheme for bringing this "Lindoro" into the house.

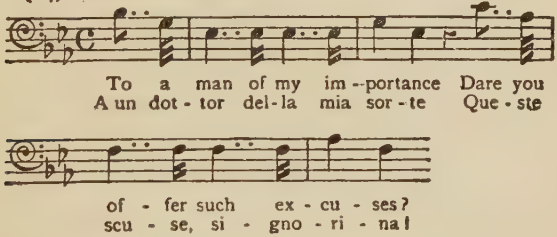
After a little affectation of maidenly reserve, Rosina consents to listen to Figaro's suggestion that she shall write Lindoro just a couple of lines saying that she expects him. It turns out, however, that the letter is already written! She takes it from her pocket and gives it to Figaro, who compliments her on her smartness. In a lively duet Rosina expresses her delight at the prospect of meeting Lindoro, while Figaro comments sarcastically on the artfulness of woman.

As Figaro comes out, Bartolo enters. He wants to know what Figaro had called about that morning. Rosina fences with him. Bartolo goes to the heart of the matter with a question — did not Figaro bring her a reply to the letter she sent by the window, that alleged aria from *The Vain Precaution?* This disconcerts her for the moment. And why, the prying Bartolo goes on, those ink-stains on her finger? Rosina is ready with her reply; she scalded her finger this morning, and applied the old-fashioned remedy of a little ink. "But there were six sheets of paper on the desk this

morning," Bartolo continues relentlessly, "and now there are only five." "The other one?" replies Rosina. "Oh, I took that to wrap up some sweets for Marcellina." "But this pen," says Bartolo, "has it not just been used for writing?" "Oh, yes," says Rosina; "I used it to draw a flower on my embroidery."

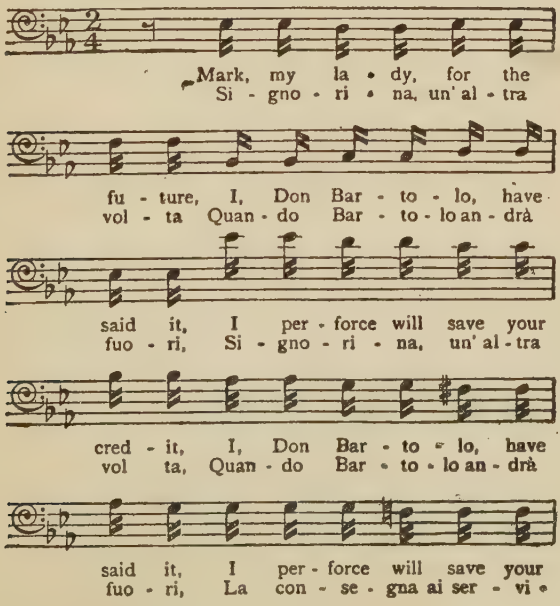
Baffled at every turn, Bartolo bids her hold her tongue, and breaks out into an aria in which he pompously warns her not to attempt to impose on a man of his quality:

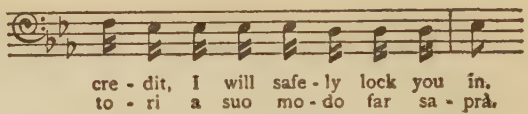
(14) *Andante maestoso.*



The concluding phases of his aria:

(15) *Vivace.*


Mark, my la-dy, for the
Si-gno-ri-na, un' al-tra
fu-ture, I, Don Bar-to-lo, have
vol-ta Quan-do Bar-to-lo an-drà
said it, I per-force will save your
fuo-ri, Si-gno-ri-na, un' al-tra
cred-it, I, Don Bar-to-lo, have
vol ta, Quan-do Bar-to-lo an-drà
said it, I per-force will save your
fuo-ri, La con-se-gna al ser-vi-



are not only an amusing expression of petulance, but an admirable example of the rapid Italian patter-song of the period.

He rails and storms at her for a long time, and then goes out. Rosina follows him, after declaring that the only effect of his tyranny will be to make her defy him all the more. The Count now enters, in the guise of a soldier, and Bartolo returns. The Count, pretending to be drunk, cannot remember the Doctor's name accurately, and makes several grotesque shots at it; but he is certain that he has been quartered upon him. Rosina returns, and the Count manages to pass the word to her that he is Lindoro.

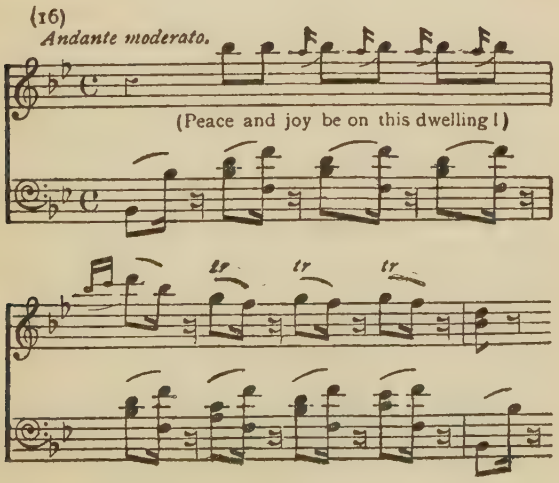
A scene of lively stage intrigue follows. Bartolo, to the momentary dismay of the Count, produces a document giving him exemption from quartering; while he was looking for it the lovers have managed to get in a few furtive words with each other. Still playing the drunken rowdy, the Count pitches the document away, and declares his fixed intention of remaining where he is. He drops a letter, upon which Rosina lets her handkerchief fall. Then, pretending to see the letter for the first time, he picks it up along with the handkerchief and gives them both to Rosina.

The servant Berta now comes in, and the five indulge in an elaborate quintet. Rosina tries tears for the melting of Bartolo's rage, and the Doctor, who has caught sight of the letter, is for a moment softened; meanwhile the Count, with sword drawn, keeps up his feigned drunken bluster. Figaro enters with his barber's basin under his arm; he has heard the noise, he tells them, down in the street, where a crowd has gathered. The Count and Bartolo soon get at cross-purposes again, but before the quarrel has gone very far a loud knock is heard at the street-door. An officer of the guard enters with his soldiers. Bartolo complains of the conduct of the drunken soldier who has forced his way into his house, and the officer is about to arrest the Count when the latter takes

him aside and shows him the insignia of his nobility. This, of course, alters the whole situation so far as the officer is concerned; though when the curtain falls, after a very long and brilliant ensemble, in which everyone insists noisily upon his own point of view, matters seem to be left for the time being very much as they were.

ACT II

The second act shows the library in Doctor Bartolo's house, containing a harpsichord, on which is some music. The Doctor has been making enquiries about the rude soldier, and finds he is not known to the regiment he claimed to belong to; and Bartolo suspects that he is an agent of the prowling Count Almaviva. There is a knock at the door, and the Count enters, this time disguised as a music-master. He pretends that he is Don Alonzo, a pupil of Basilio, and has come to give Rosina her usual lesson in place of his master, who is confined to the house with illness. The motive on which his dialogue with Bartolo is founded is exquisite in its oily, ironical politeness:

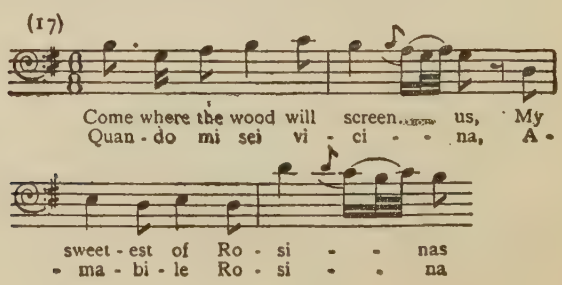


Bartolo is very suspicious, but the supposed Don Alonzo partly wins his confidence by telling him that in Almaviva's lodging, which happens to be his also, he has found a letter from Rosina to the Count which Alonzo now hands to Bartolo. Perhaps, Alonzo hints, by means of this letter it may be possible to persuade Rosina that her lover has been faithless. "Calumny!" says Bartolo to himself: "an apt pupil of his master Basilio!" The Count, however, has got himself into a bit of a mess; his tongue, in the embarrassment of the moment, has outrun his common sense. But for the moment he gains his end, which is to see Rosina; Bartolo brings in his ward, and the assumed Alonzo pretends to give her her lesson, Bartolo listening and watching.

To the Count's accompaniment at the harpsichord Rosina sings a rondo from *The Vain Precaution,* but soon she breaks off into an appeal to Lindoro to help her, which the Count promises to do. This is the famous Lesson Scene; it has long been the custom for the prima donna at this point to sing anything she likes, her preference, of course, being for an aria, however irrelevant to the play or the period, that will allow her to show off her virtuosity. The selections have ranged from "Robin Adair" and "Home, Sweet Home" to the Mad Scene from Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor,* and to things even madder than that.

Bartolo does not think much of the song. Music, he says, is going to the devil in these days; in his young days it was much better — had more tune in it — which he offers to prove by singing a favourite ditty of a preceding generation. He has hardly got through more than half a dozen lines, however:

(17)



when he is annoyed to find that Figaro, who has entered with his basin under his arm, is imitating him behind his back.

Figaro insists on shaving Bartolo at once; no other day will do, as he is in such demand all over the town. His engagement book for the morrow is full. He has to shave and cut the hair of all the officers of the regiment that has just come to town; the old Marchese Andronica wants her blond wig dressing; the young Count Bombè's top-knot needs attending to; to Bernadone, the lawyer, who yesterday fell ill of indigestion, he must give a purgative; to say nothing of other engagements. No, to-morrow is quite impossible; the shaving of Bartolo must be done to-day.

Figaro, having obtained Bartolo's keys, goes to get the shaving utensils, and a great crash is heard "off," as if all the crockery in the house were being broken. Bartolo rushes out to see what has happened, and returns with Figaro, crying out that owing to the barber's clumsiness his best dishes and wine-glasses have been smashed. It has all been a ruse on the part of Figaro, who has seized his opportunity to take from the bunch the key of the balcony. He proceeds to shave Bartolo, but has not got very far with the business when, to everyone's amazement, the supposedly bed-ridden Basilio enters.

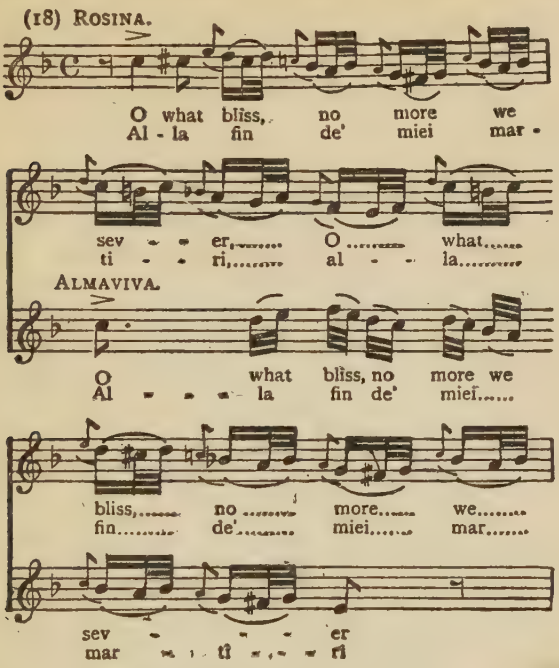
The situation is a critical one for the conspirators. The Count saves it by taking Basilio aside and persuading him that he is very ill and ought not to have ventured out of the house with such a fever on him; Figaro feels Basilio's pulse and confirms the awful diagnosis — it can't be anything less than scarlet fever. Basilio does not know what to make of it all until the Count surreptitiously passes him a purse, which, welcome as it is in itself, still fails to elucidate the matter completely for him. But at last, by dint of hard work, the company manages to persuade him that he really is ill, and in a most amusing ensemble he is persuaded to go home and get to bed.

Figaro now resumes the shaving of Bartolo, placing himself in such a position as to hide the lovers, who hurriedly arrange for an elopement at midnight, the Count now having the key. While trying to explain to Rosina the use he has been compelled to make

of her letter, he happens to raise his voice a little too high, and Bartolo overhears him. He escapes from Figaro, and, after railing at them all, drives them out. Then he calls for Ambrogio and Berta; the former he sends to Basilio, bidding him come at once, while Berta is to go downstairs and see that no one else enters. On second thoughts he decides that as he cannot trust anybody, he had better go himself; his doing so allows Berta to have the stage to herself for a few minutes, during which she sings a pleasant little song that has no great bearing on the action.

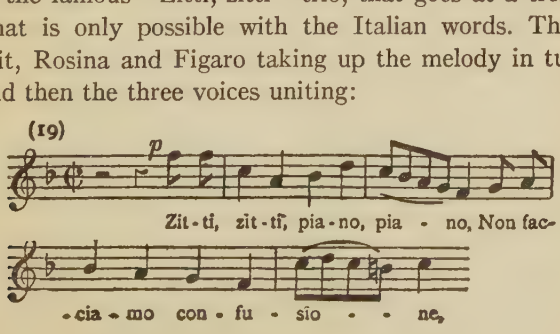
This over, and Berta having left the stage, Bartolo and Basilio enter. The Count's trick as "Alonzo" is exposed by Basilio, and it becomes clear to Bartolo that the supposed music-master was another emissary of the marauding Count; while Basilio is sure that it was the Count in person. Bartolo sees the need for prompt action, and sends Basilio away to bring a notary to draw up the marriage contract. Then a bright idea occurs to him; calling Rosina, he hands her the letter that has been given him by the Count, which, he says, is a proof that her lover has another mistress. Rosina recognises the letter as her own, and having learned how it has come into Bartolo's hands, she assumes that Lindoro has betrayed her, and, the viper in her replacing the kitten, she vows vengeance on him. She is now willing to marry Bartolo; and she confides to him the plan of Lindoro and Figaro to come for her at midnight. Bartolo tells her to go to her room and locks the door while he runs for the police, and the wretched Rosina obeys.

There is a short orchestral interlude, depicting a storm. When this is over the shutters open, and Figaro and the Count, both wrapped in cloaks, while Figaro carries a lantern, enter by the window. The Count's transports at the sight of Rosina are soon ended; she turns on him and abuses him roundly for his treachery. The time has now come for him to reveal himself; throwing back his cloak he appears in the rich dress of a nobleman, and he explains that he is not Lindoro but Almaviva. The happy pair indulge in a very florid duet, the general character of which may be gathered from the following phrases:


(18) ROSINA.
O what bliss, no more we
Al - la fin de' miei mar -
sev - er, O what
ti - ri, al - la
ALMAVIVA.
O what bliss, no more we
Al - la fin de' miei
bliss, no more we
fin de' miei mar
sev - er
mar - ti - ri

while Figaro impatiently exhorts them to put an end to their billing and cooing and make their escape before it is too late; through the window he has seen two people carrying a lantern.

As time is obviously pressing, they delay no longer than is necessary to sing a trio expressive of their anxiety to get away at once. This is the famous " Zitti, zitti " trio, that goes at a tremendous pace that is only possible with the Italian words. The Count begins it, Rosina and Figaro taking up the melody in turn after him, and then the three voices uniting:



("Sh! sh! softly! softly! we mustn't make a noise! Let us go quickly by the balcony ladder.")

When at last they make up their minds to leave in a hurry, they find, to their dismay, that the ladder has disappeared. All seems lost. While they are hiding and wondering what they can do, Basilio enters, bringing with him the notary. Figaro takes charge of the new situation: stepping forward, he reminds the notary that he has been ordered to draw up a marriage contract between Count Almaviva and his (Figaro's) niece. By a fortunate chance, the parties happen to be here, so if the notary has the contract with him they can proceed. Basilio asks where Bartolo is, but the Count, taking him aside, offers him a ring, and at the same time showing him a pistol, promises him a couple of bullets in his head if he does not behave as he should do. Basilio says he prefers the ring, and, with Figaro, witnesses the marriage contract.

The ceremony over, the Count kisses Rosina's hand, while Figaro takes Basilio into his arms in a grotesque embrace. Just then, Bartolo enters with an officer and a patrol of soldiers. He bids the officer arrest Almaviva and Figaro as thieves. The Count, for the moment, refuses to give the officer his name, but presents Rosina as his wife, which staggers Bartolo. The officer becoming importunate and a little aggressive, the Count discloses his name, to the vast astonishment of Bartolo. His protests are in vain: the Count, in a florid aria, tells him that resistance is useless, that Rosina has escaped from his clutches. A second aria, in which he assures Rosina of his undying love, is accompanied by the felicitations of the company — except Bartolo, who now rounds on Basilio. The latter admits his defection from the cause, but pleads that the Count had, in his purse, arguments that were quite irresistible. What chiefly annoys Bartolo is that he himself, by removing the ladder, should have made the marriage certain; it was, as Basilio ironically reminds him, a vain precaution. Bartolo is placated by the Count's gift to him of Rosina's dowry, and everyone now being satisfied, the opera ends with a joyous ensemble.

Rossini's immortal work is the finest flower of the older Italian musical comedy.

WILLIAM TELL

THE case of Rossini is one of the most curious in musical history. Although he lived to the age of seventy-six, his career virtually closed with the composition of *William Tell* at the age of thirty-seven.

It is true that his *Stabat Mater* appeared in 1842, and a *Messe Solennelle* in 1865, and that from time to time during the latter half of his life he wrote a number of vocal and pianoforte trifles; but it was in the opera-house that he had made his great reputation, and, though he lived until 1868, the opera-house saw no more of him after 1829.

The majority of Rossini's operas have passed so completely out of the repertory of most theatres that it is difficult for people today to realise that in his own time he was regarded as a daring innovator. Responsible critics of his epoch spoke of him very much as the critics of a later day spoke of Wagner — the unapproachable master who had created a new heaven and a new earth in opera; while devotees of the older school shrank from him as a sort of operatic Bolshevist.

All this is rather hard for the plain man to understand nowadays, the reason being that, knowing little or nothing of the Italian opera before Rossini, he has no basis of comparison. As a matter of fact, Rossini altered the form and the spirit of Italian opera in a way and to an extent that must have been rather disturbing to the conservative minds of his own day.

It was not merely that he wrote better and livelier and stronger music than his predecessors and contemporaries. He broke away,

bit by bit, from a good deal of the older formalism of structure; he shortened the long and dreary recitatives that were common in the older opera — and only tolerable there because nobody listened to them, preferring to chatter or eat ices all the time — and substituted for these a more animated and natural musical dialogue; he did a great deal to break the preposterous tyranny exercised by the singers over the composer, putting it out of their power to deface his melody with their "ornaments" by himself writing out in full the coloratura with which he desired his melodies to be embellished; he made opera in many ways more natural and self-sufficing; he developed the expressive power of the choral ensembles, and placed them not merely, as was customary before his time, at the end of an act, but wherever they were called for by the dramatic necessities of the story.

All this may sound somewhat obvious nowadays; but in the early years of the nineteenth century these were real reforms that it took some courage to carry out; and we can well understand the consternation of old-fashioned music lovers like Lord Mount Edgecumbe, who were convinced that Rossini and his imitators were ruining opera.

At the age of thirty-seven Rossini had written thirty-seven operas, and thirty-four of these had been produced within the space of fourteen years — not a bad record for a man who was regarded as constitutionally one of the laziest of mankind. His last opera to be written expressly for Italy was *Semiramide,* which was produced in Venice in 1823.

It is clear from this, and from the work or two that preceded it, that in his own dashing, unreflective way Rossini was heading towards a more serious conception of opera; and it was probably for this reason that his last Italian works did not at first meet with such favour as some of his earlier productions had done. By 1823 he was the most talked-of composer of his epoch. He was still only thirty-one, and there was every probability that, with a change of environment and the impact of new influences, creating new ambitions, his mind and his art would undergo further developments.

In the late winter of 1823 he went to London, where a new opera had been commissioned from him. He remained in England until the following July. The opera, owing to the bankruptcy of the theatrical manager, was never produced, and, indeed, seems not to have been written, apart from the first act; but Rossini made himself immensely popular in Society by the charm of his personality, and he and his wife, who was a singer, were in great demand for concerts. He charged handsome fees, and when he went to Paris in July 1824, he carried away with him some seven thousand pounds — more than he had earned in all the preceding years of his life.

In Paris he was engaged as musical director of the Théâtre Italien for eighteen months at a salary of twenty thousand francs. He performed his duties very conscientiously, and produced some of his own works that had not previously been given in France. When his agreement expired, he was retained in Paris, where his possible future services to French opera were regarded by the Government as being valuable, by a continuation of his salary of twenty thousand francs under the guise of a pension.

The conditions in Paris, then looked upon as the leading city for opera, were very different from those he had been accustomed to in Italy, and they probably set him thinking hard. The result was that gradual change in his conception of opera that culminated in *William Tell*. Pure lyrical singing had never been the strong point of the French; writers like Rousseau, indeed, had argued that the French would never be able to sing like the Italians because their language was not made for singing. But the French had always shown more liking than most nations for the dramatic side of opera, and, in addition, the Paris Opera, with its large Government subvention, was able to spend large amounts on careful rehearsal and elaborate production.

For the Grand Opera he recast and partly rewrote two of his Italian operas — *Maometto,* which became the *Siege of Corinth* (1826) and *Moses in Egypt* (1827). His next work for Paris was *Count Ory,* in which he had the benefit of the co-operation of so skilled a librettist as the famous Scribe. This opera, in which

Rossini incorporated some of the music from an Italian opera, *The Journey to Rheims* (written for the coronation of Charles X in 1825), was produced in 1828.

Rossini was evidently ripening for a serious work on a bigger scale than anything he had yet attempted; and it was a great pity that just when his powers were at their height he should have allied himself with a singularly poor pair of librettists. He took an unusual amount of pains over the composition of *William Tell,* retiring to the country house of his friend Aguado, the banker, at Petit-Bourg. In these quiet surroundings he completed in six months the whole of the piano portion of the work, leaving only the orchestration to be added on his return to Paris.

A new type of opera subject was coming into fashion; people were tired of classical mythology and wanted to see the life of their own time on the stage, or something that they could correlate with this. Liberal ideas were also in the air, as a result of the political and social fermentation of the time; liberty and democracy were idealised, and tyrants were in bad odour.

In 1828, a year before the production of *William Tell,* Auber had made a great sensation with his *Masaniello,* that deals with the revolt of the Neapolitans against their Spanish oppressors. The extraordinary excitement created by this work may be gathered from the fact that a performance of it in Brussels in August 1830 led to risings that ended in the expulsion of the Dutch from Belgium. It was quite in accord with the spirit of the times, then, that Rossini should become enamoured of the story of *William Tell,* which had lately become known in France through a translation of Schiller's German play upon the subject.

He chose for his librettist, or had chosen for him by others, a certain M. de Jouy, an inferior dramatist of the day who had made something of a reputation for himself in musical circles by writing the libretti for *The Vestal, Fernand Cortez,* and other operas of Spontini's. Jouy's vanity made him think more of himself than of the composer.

He turned out in the first place a long poem of some seven

hundred verses that seemingly had the minimum of relation to the stage. Rossini finding this text impossible, a M. Bis was called in to get the text into a better shape. Precisely what Bis did with the libretto is not known, but he is generally credited with the second act, which is undeniably the best of the five. But Bis, like Jouy, found that Rossini had a will of his own in these matters; and both librettists were worried by his incessant demands that the verses should be reshaped to suit his musical ideas. In the end they came to regard themselves as very aggrieved persons.

Like the Leicestershire squire, Charles Jennens, the author of the text of the *Messiah,* who thought that Handel had let him down rather badly — " I have with great difficulty made him correct some of the grossest faults in the composition, but he retains his overture obstinately," he wrote to a friend — M. de Jouy and M. Bis regarded themselves as great dramatists whose masterpiece had been ruined by the caprice and stupidity of a mere composer.

They thought it necessary, in the interests of their own reputations, to publish the libretto with an explanatory preface. From this it appears that of the libretto as it was originally written several scenes had been cut out in obedience to Rossini's demands, the place of certain others had been changed, and some verses had been put in only because Rossini insisted on them for music that was already in his head. They candidly admitted that some of their lines were not up to the highest poetic standard, but they pleaded in extenuation that the rhythm of these had been fixed for them in advance by the composer. However, they said, they thought it advisable to publish the libretto in its final form, because the spectators would have a natural desire to know what the opera was about, and in the theatre the instruments often made it impossible for them to catch the words.

They ended up with an artful compliment to Rossini as the only " creator " of the opera. They were thus safely on the side of the angels if the work turned out to be a success, while if it proved a failure they had cunningly left it to be inferred that it was all

Rossini's fault for not having accepted their masterpiece as it originally stood.

As a matter of fact, a third hand had been made use of by Rossini — that of Aguado's secretary, Armand Marrast, who had put the finishing touch on many a line that the composer had found impossible.

The work was produced at the Opera on the 3rd August, 1829. Its fate was curious. After an enthusiastic reception, and in spite of the general recognition that it was not only Rossini's masterpiece but a significant sign of the times, the public enthusiasm gradually cooled. It was given in its proper form fifty-six times. Then it was shortened to three acts by the omission of the third and the telescoping of the fourth and fifth into one; and at last the second act alone came to be given as a sort of curtain raiser.

There is a well-known story of the Director of the Opera meeting Rossini one day and saying to him, with the evident desire to please him, " To-night, Master, we play the second act of *William Tell* again." " What! the whole of it? " was Rossini's ironic reply.

In 1837 the part of Arnold was taken up by the great French tenor Duprez, whose fine performance of the part restored the work to temporary popularity. In London it was given in 1839 and again in 1848; but Henry Chorley, writing in 1861, had to record regretfully that, in spite of its showing Rossini's genius at its best, it never managed to take hold of the general public in this country.

Chorley, who had a great admiration for Rossini's genius, and considerable insight into it, has some shrewd remarks on the subject. He thinks that Rossini relied so much on his musical invention as to be far too careless about his libretti. " It would appear," he says, " as if the greatest of Italians had taken a despotic pride in choosing a subject without reference to dramatic treatment, and without a leading female interest, always of the first importance to opera, be the part long or brief." " The music, however," he prophesies, " will grow so long as music lives and lasts. Year by year will be more and more seen the rare characteristic beauty royally showered over the work from its earliest to

its latest note." He thinks that the reason the public preferred the operas of inferior composers such as Donizetti was that these afforded more " scope for action."

It certainly looks as if Rossini had been culpably careless about the dramatic aspect of the story; and if it be true that he rejected the libretto of *The Jewess* (afterwards composed by Halévy), which Chorley calls " the most powerful opera book in the modern list," choosing instead of it the relatively feeble *William Tell* of M. de Jouy, the charge appears to be a just one.

There has been a vast amount of speculation as to the reasons for Rossini's never taking up operatic composition again after *William Tell*. It is said that he was piqued by the failure of the public to take to its heart what he knew to be the best of his works; that he was jealous of the growing vogue of Meyerbeer; that he had made so much money (he was given many a good Stock Exchange tip by his friends the Rothschilds) that he could indulge his natural bent towards indolence; that he wanted, in the years following the production of *William Tell*, to live in Italy with his old father, who, not knowing a word of French, would have been unhappy in Paris; and so on.

There may be something in each of these explanations with the exception of that relating to Meyerbeer; although, while Rossini was probably incapable of the meaner form of jealousy of his powerful rival, he may have realised that only a colossal effort on his own part could suffice to stem the Meyerbeer tide, and he may have preferred not to run the risk of another failure.

But Chorley makes a suggestion as to Rossini's abstention from opera for the remaining years of his life that may be the correct one, and in any case is interesting: " The strange, obstinate retirement from creation of such an artist as Signor Rossini," he wrote about 1861, while the composer was still alive, " in the prime of his powers, with *Guillaume Tell* just made, and myriads of fancies still unexpressed, has always reminded me of nothing so much as of the old story, true in the main, which, however, has been added to and coloured and lectured on till small truth, it may be, is left in it — the story, I mean, of the man who

left his wife in pique, without bidding her farewell, and who dwelt, for a long term of years undiscovered, in a house on the opposite side of the street, long after her agony of wish to discover him had died out in blank hopelessness. After holding out for a certain time, pride forbade him to go home.

"Who has ever weighed the strength of perversity, the self-punishment of the implacable, or the comfort of their conviction that if the outer world suffers by it, so much the better! Thus it may be that the perpetual reference to, and solicitude concerning Signor Rossini during the past thirty years, the anxiety to be allowed to hope that his last words were not said, the return to his best operas (in spite of the feeble stories), after one and another writer have been praised, become wearisome, and been laid by, may have amounted to so many incitements to persistence in the course of musical perversity, by which we have lost so much. No stranger story is, at all events, recorded in the annals of art, with respect to a genius who filled his own world with its glory, and then chose to vanish 'not unseen.'"

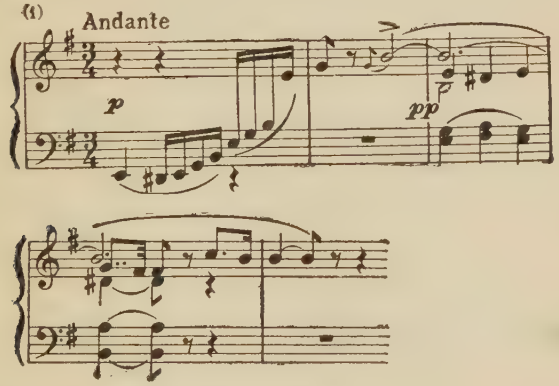
The period of the opera is the beginning of the fourteenth century, when the Swiss were trying to free themselves from Austrian rule; and the central episode in it is of course the old story — or rather the legend, for it is found in other places at other times — of the shooting of an apple from the head of Tell's son. Rossini had more than once in the earlier part of his career flown in the face of tradition by giving an important part to a bass, and he makes a baritone of William Tell, who is really the main hero of the opera. There are two other Swiss patriots, Arnold, the tenor, and Walter Fürst, a bass.

The chief soprano is Mathilde, a Princess of the Austrian house. Hedwiga, Tell's wife, is a mezzo-soprano, and Jemmy, his little son, is of course a soprano. Gesler, the oppressive Governor of Schwitz and Uri, is a bass, as is also Arnold's father, Melcthal. The minor characters are Rudolph, a captain of Gesler's guards, who is a tenor, a fisherman named Ruodi, also a tenor, and Leuthold, a herdsman, who is a bass.

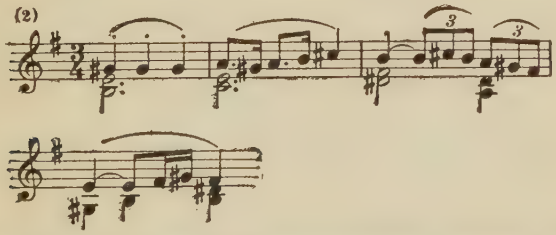
The overture, which had been the joy of both the concert-goer

and the opera audience for the last hundred years, is really a little symphonic poem. A certain eminent musician of the present day, when he was asked to go to a festival of modern Swiss music, replied, " Modern Swiss music? There isn't any. The only piece of decent Swiss music ever written is the overture to *William Tell*." Swiss music or not, it is excellent music.

The preliminary *andante* paints the piece of a pastoral scene. The opening theme, which must have been a daringly original piece of colouring in its day, is entrusted to five solo 'cellos with the double basses:



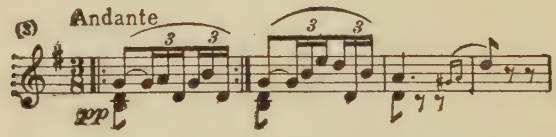
This is followed by a second theme:



the development of which is interrupted for a moment by a soft roll in the kettledrum, a presage of the coming storm. The succeeding *allegro* paints the storm itself; commencing with soft hurrying figures in the strings and veiled wood-wind harmonies it works up to a pelting *fortissimo* tempest; from time to time we hear

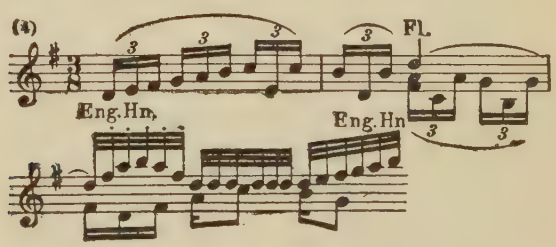
high up in the wood-wind, the piccolo being especially prominent, staccato notes that seem to fall like raindrops.

The storm rises to its height, spends its fury, and disappears as gradually as it came, with murmurous *tremolandi* in the strings, and little flicks in the flute that suggest streaks of clear blue coming into the heavy sky. Then the English horn gives out a *Ranz des vaches:*

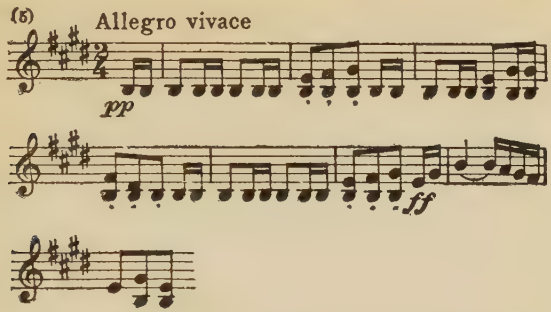


(The *Ranz des vaches* is the call that the Swiss herdsman blows on the Alpine horn to his cattle to call them from the lower to the higher pastures in June. Rossini is said to have used some ten or twelve *Ranz des vaches* in the score of *William Tell;* he probably culled them from a book on the subject by one Tarenne, published in 1813.)

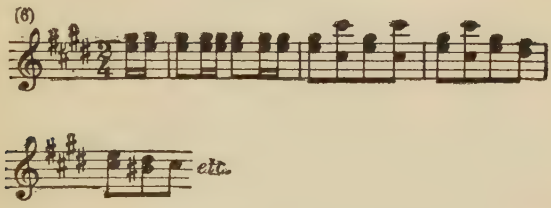
The call is answered by the flute in the higher octave, and a romantic series of calls and echoes ensues. Then comes another melody for the English horn:



which in time is succeeded by a development of the main call (No. 3). As this dies away, the trumpets seize upon the B natural and ring out a brilliant fanfare in the key of E major, the relative remoteness of which from the preceding key of G major is splendidly effective. The trumpets are answered by the horn, and to the strains of a lively galop:



a hunting party comes upon the scene. The second strain of the galop:



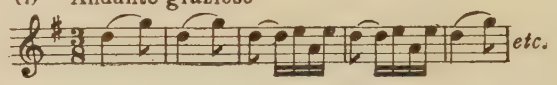
is as exhilarating as the first. The remainder of the overture is devoted to brilliant repetitions and developments of these two themes.

The curtain having risen, we see the shores of the Lake of Lucerne. On the right is William Tell's châlet; on the left a waterfall, spanned by a little bridge. Jemmy, Tell's little son, is practising with bow and arrows; his mother, Hedwiga, sits in front of her house plaiting a basket. She keeps looking now at her son, now at her husband, alternately delighting in the happiness of the one and concerned about the other; for William Tell, leaning on his spade, obviously has something on his mind.

Peasants engaged in one occupation or another are scattered about the stage; some of them are festooning with green three small châlets, the future residences of three newly wedded couples, for this is the day on which, according to the ancient usage, three marriages are to be made and blessed by the elder of the

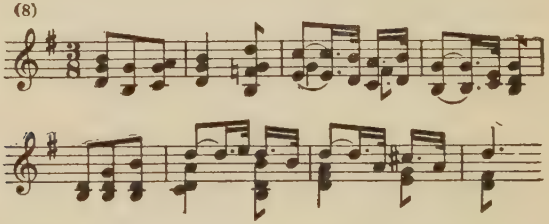
community. A brief orchestral introduction, with a melody that commences in the violins:

(7) Andante grazioso



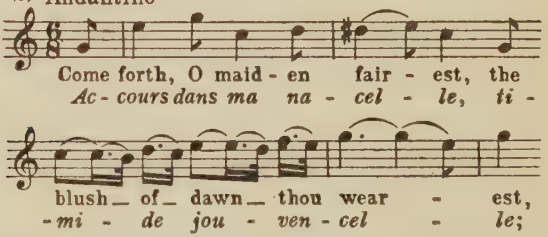
paints a charming picture of the pastoral scene. The peasants celebrate the beauty of the day and the interest of the occasion in a chorus:

(8)



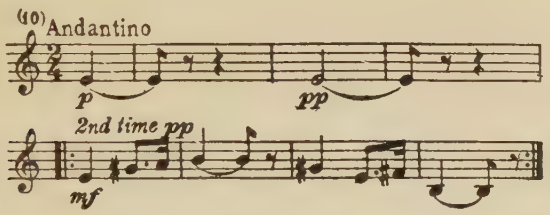
after which there comes from the fisherman Ruodi, who is in his boat on the lake, an invitation to his lady love to accompany him on an excursion:

(9) Andantino

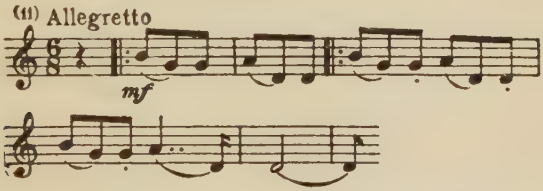


The light orchestral accompaniment to this changes to gloomier colours as, the first stanza of Ruodi's song being finished, William Tell, in an aside, contrasts the youthful fisherman, singing of his happiness and his love, with himself, racked by the thought of the oppression to which his beloved country is subject; "while he sings, Switzerland weeps for its liberty." Ruodi continues his song, which is made the text of a quartet between himself, Jemmy, Hedwiga, and William Tell.

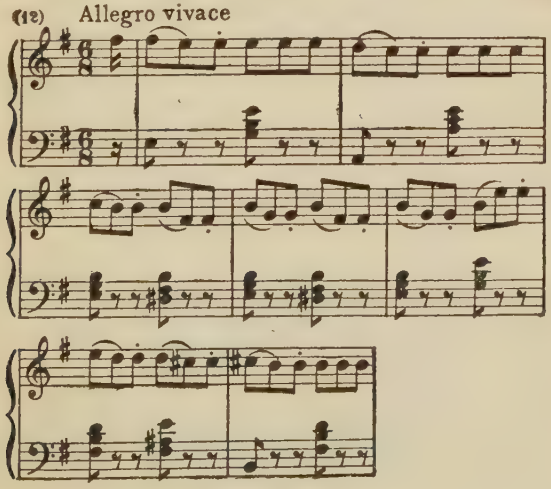
At the conclusion of this another *Ranz des vaches* is heard in the distance:



and then another in faster time:



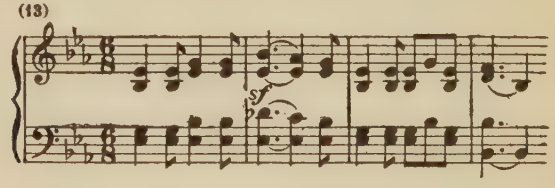
Each is followed by the usual echo. It is the signal from the mountains for the peasants to cease the labours of the day and give themselves up to enjoyment; the joyous cries of the chorus are accompanied by some sparkling melodies in the orchestra, of which the following is most freely used:



All greet Melcthal, the patriarch of the village, who now enters from the hill, leaning on the arm of his son Arnold; the latter, in an aside, contrasts the happy state of the lovers with his own. Melcthal, called upon by Tell to give his blessing, does so to the accompaniment of a brilliant treatment in the orchestra of the *Ranz des vaches* quoted as No. 10, and everyone joins in a brilliant ensemble.

Melcthal, at Tell's invitation, goes into the latter's châlet, after having exhorted his son to follow the example of the couples of the day and marry, for his country's sake. This gives Arnold the cue for a soliloquy upon his own unhappy lot. It has been his fate to fall in love with Princess Mathilde, who may one day rule over them; for her he has forgotten his duty towards his country, and has fought in the ranks of the Austrian oppressors. Distant horns:

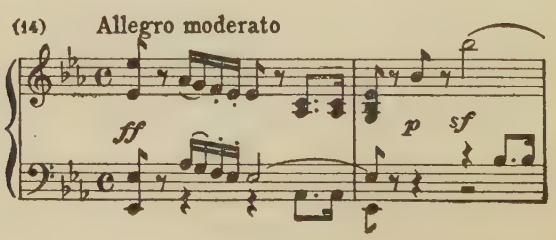
(13)

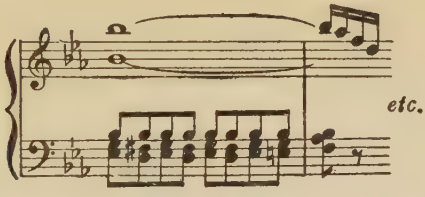


break in upon his soliloquy. From these signs of the hunt he surmises that Gesler is nearing, and with him will be Mathilde. Love drowning every other emotion in his breast, he is rushing off to greet Mathilde, when he is stopped by Tell, who has come out of his châlet.

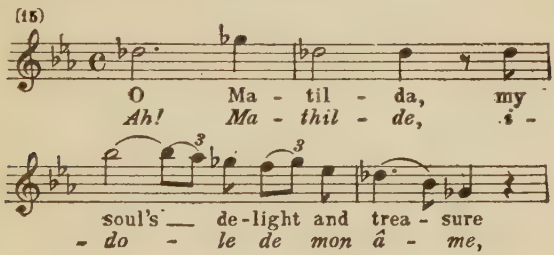
To the accompaniment of a stern, arresting figure in the orchestra:

(14) Allegro moderato



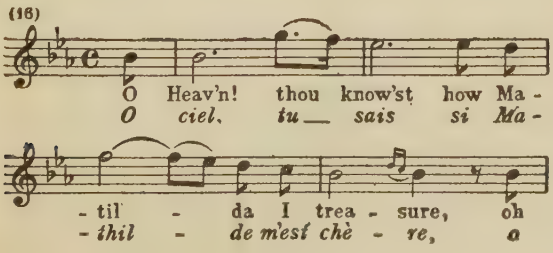


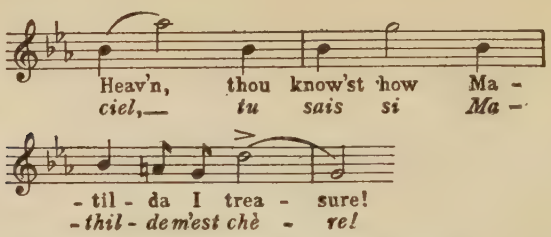
the patriot asks the young man the cause of his perturbation and exhorts him to remember his duty to his country. Arnold breaks out into a passionate cry to Mathilde:



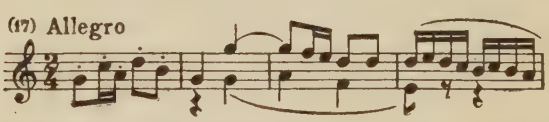
and this and a counter-motive of Tell's are worked up in admirable style. In answer to Tell's further appeals to his patriotism, Arnold, pointing to the châlet, bids Tell remember the danger he may bring upon those he loves; Tell's reply is that he knows this only too well, but he knows also the weight of the chains under which his country groans.

The horns of Gesler's hunting party (No. 13) are heard again, and a final appeal from Tell goads Arnold into a cry that he too will go forth and brave the insolent oppressor, although within himself he is still torn between love for his country, his father, and Mathilde:

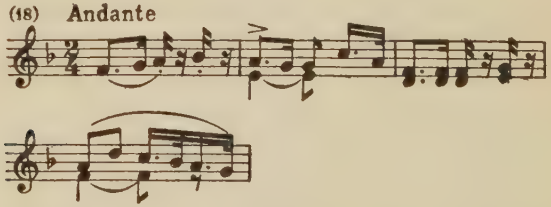




The three bridegrooms appear, followed later by the three brides, and the stage gradually fills with people, to the accompaniment of a simple pastoral melody:

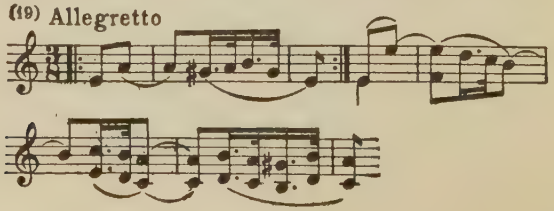


Hedwiga calls upon old Melcthal to bless the rite; the bridal pairs kneel before him, and all join in a chorus based on the following melody:

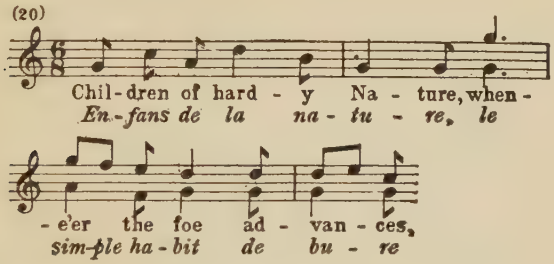


against which we hear, from time to time, the melancholy ejaculations of Arnold.

Gesler's horns are heard again in the distance, and Arnold slips away unperceived by the others. Tell, in spite of the expostulations of his anxious wife, tries to goad his compatriots into revolt, and then departs in search of Arnold. To a graceful melody:



the peasants shower congratulations and good wishes upon the married pairs, and there follows the inevitable ballet. Jemmy, having distinguished himself in the archery contest, is fêted in a chorus:



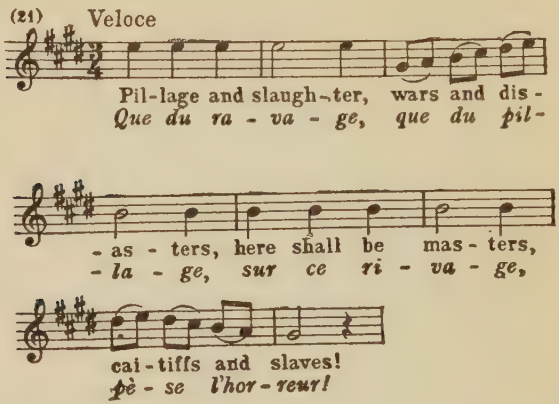
while the archers march round the stage.

The joyous proceedings are interrupted by the sudden cry of the herdsman Leuthold, who pauses in exhaustion and leans upon a bloody axe. In excited accents he tells the horrified crowd that his only daughter having been carried off by one of the Austrian soldiers, he has cloven the miscreant's skull with his axe. He implores Ruodi to ferry him over to safety on the opposite side of the lake, but the fisherman refuses, on account of the danger from the rocks and the strength of the current.

At this point Tell returns, his search for Arnold having been unsuccessful. Outside are heard the voices of the Austrian soldiers clamouring for their prey, and Leuthold makes another despairing appeal for help. Learning of Ruodi's refusal, Tell himself offers to row the herdsman across; as the boat leaves the shore, the chorus, to an expressive orchestral accompaniment, sings a typically Rossinian prayer to Heaven to aid the fugitives.

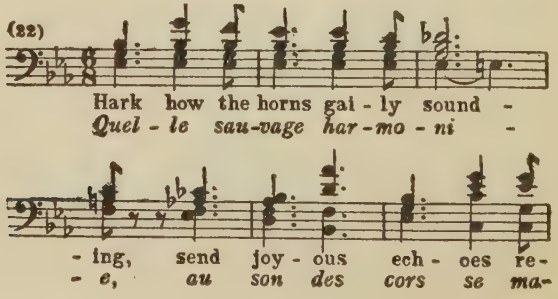
A threatening theme that has been heard in the orchestra before the prayer makes its reappearance as Rudolph, Gesler's captain, enters with the soldiers. He has hardly had time to demand that Leuthold shall be given up to him when a great cry of thankfulness goes up from Hedwiga, Jemmy, and the others as the boat is seen to have reached the opposite shore safely. All refuse to tell the name of the escaped man; and Melcthal, having

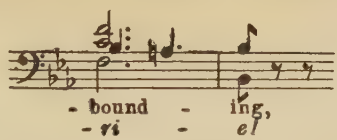
defied Rudolph, is arrested, Rudolph breaking into a furious threat of vengeance upon the Swiss:


(21) Veloce
Pil-lage and slaugh-ter, wars and dis-
Que du ra - va - ge, que du pil-
- as - ters, here shall be mas - ters,
- la - ge, sur ce ri - va - ge,
cai-tiffs and slaves!
pè - se l'hor-reur!

The strain is taken up by the others in turn, and worked up into one of those imposing finales in which Rossini delighted. The villagers try to rescue Melcthal, but are held back by the soldiers' spears. Melcthal is being dragged off roughly as the curtain falls.

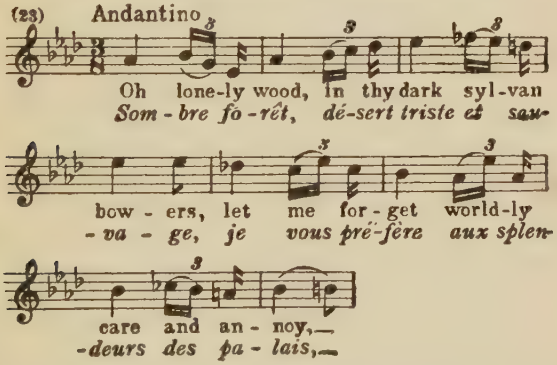
The setting of the greatly admired second act is a pine forest on the heights of Rütli, commanding the Waldstetten lake. It is night. The stage fills with hunters bearing torches, some carrying the trophies of the hunt. The hunting motive associated with Gesler (No. 13) is heard in the orchestra, and the chorus break out into a vigorous song in praise of the joys of the hunt:





In the distance is heard the song of the shepherds bringing their flocks down into the valley, and their evening song merges into the chorus of hunters, which, however, is soon resumed. No. 13 is heard once more in the horns; it is the call to return, and the hunters leave the stage, the horns dying away across the lake.

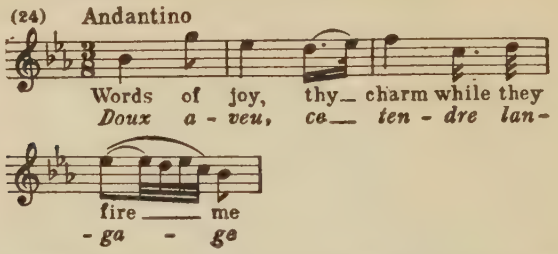
After an expressive orchestral introduction, admirably suggestive of the romance of the forest by night, Mathilde enters. During the hunt she has caught sight of Arnold, and believes he may have followed her to this secluded spot. After an introductory recitative she sings the once famous aria " Sombre forêt ":


(23) Andantino
Oh lone-ly wood, in thy dark syl-van
Som - bre fo - rêt, dé-sert triste et sau-
bow - ers, let me for - get world-ly
- va - ge, je vous pré-fère aux splen-
care and an - noy,—
-deurs des pa - lais,—

in which she tells us that she prefers love under the simple conditions that Arnold can offer her to the splendours of the court. No matter how sincere her emotion, a leading lady in opera has her rights, and so Mathilde's aria contains a fair amount of brilliant coloratura.

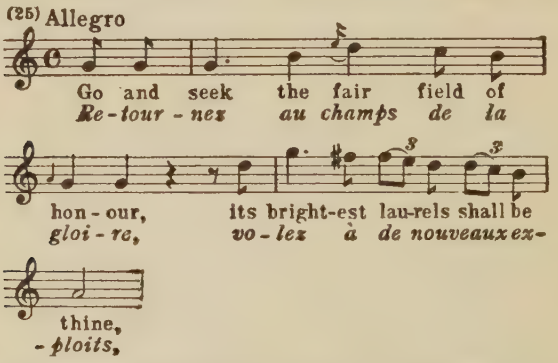
The aria concluded, Arnold enters, and after some characteristically French compliments and excuses on the part of each of them, Arnold confesses his love and implores Mathilde to command him, if she so wishes it, to abandon even his country and his father

for her. A confession on her part that she returns his love draws from him a tender melody:



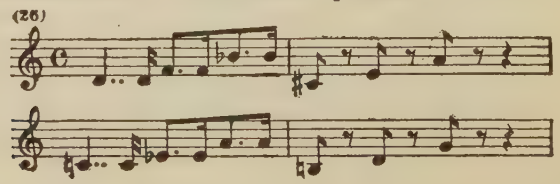
which is worked up into a duet that was the admiration of our grandfathers.

The pulse of the music quickens as Mathilde urges her lover:

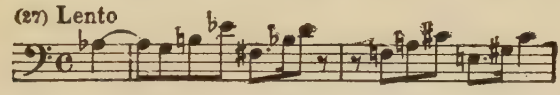

(25) Allegro
Go and seek the fair field of
Re - tour - nez au champs de la
hon - our, its bright-est lau-rels shall be
gloi - re, vo - lez à de nouveaux ex-
thine,
- ploits,

to return to the field of battle and win a glory that shall ennoble him in the eyes of the world and justify her choice, which he consents to do.

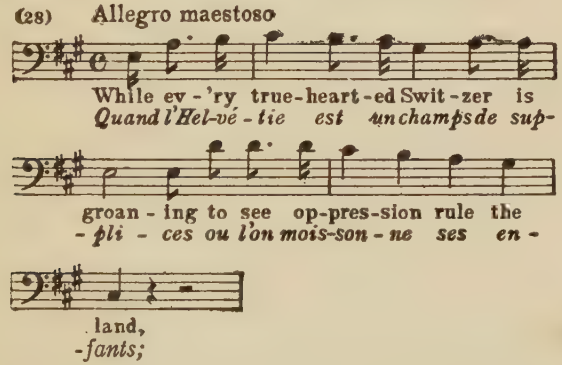
Someone is seen approaching, and Mathilde hastily quits Arnold, promising to meet him again at dawn next day in the ancient chapel. The new-comers are Tell and Walter Fürst. They enter to the accompaniment of an orchestral phrase:



which, as will be seen, is a curious anticipation on Rossini's part of the theme representative of Faust in Liszt's *Faust Symphony:*

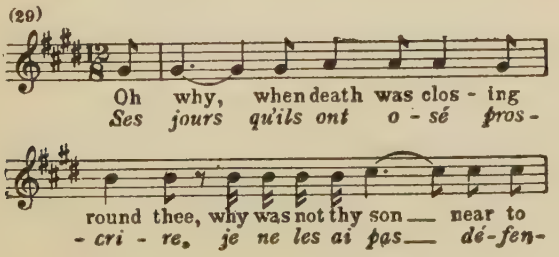


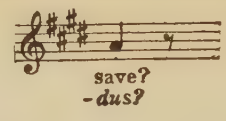
The two patriots reproach Arnold for his indifference to his country's woes and his infatuation with the alien Princess. Arnold declares his intention of leaving so hopeless a country to find distraction and glory in war, and is upbraided by Tell:


(28) Allegro maestoso
While ev - 'ry true-heart-ed Swit-zer is
Quand l'Hel-vé - tie est un champs de sup-
groan - ing to see op-pres-sion rule the
- pli - ces ou l'on mois-son - ne ses en -
land,
-fants;

for his desertion of his native land to join the ranks of its enemies.

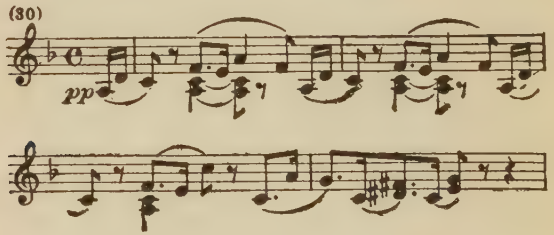
Arnold reiterates his resolve, but is pulled up by Fürst, who, to the strain of No. 28, hints at a fresh crime on Gesler's part that calls for Arnold's presence at the funeral rites. The young man learns that his father has been executed for his defiance of Gesler, and he is filled with remorse:


(29)
Oh why, when death was clos - ing
Ses jours qu'ils ont o - sé pros -
round thee, why was not thy son near to
- cri - re, je ne les ai pas dé-fen-



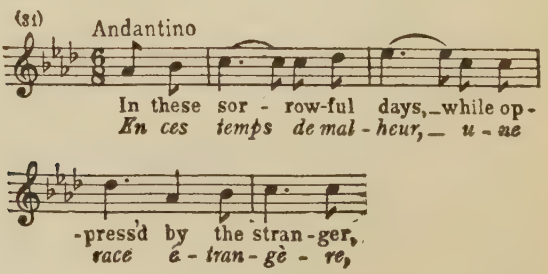
While he is giving full vent to his anguish the others, blending their voices with his in a trio, rejoice at these signs of a change of heart in him.

Arnold has now only one thought, that of vengeance. The others tell him to be present that night at a gathering of patriots who are planning a revolt; and after another vigorous trio in praise of vengeance and liberty there is heard a soft roll in the kettle-drums, followed by a call in the horns, this by some *pizzicato* notes in the 'cellos and basses, and this in turn by a march-like, but as yet very quiet, melody in the strings:



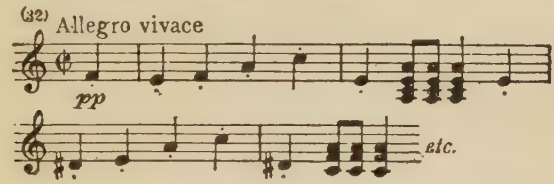
All this is the prelude to the famous scene of the Gathering of the Cantons.

The patriots come upon the stage stealthily — first of all the men of Unterwald, then the men of Schwitz with a tune of their own:



and finally the men of Uri. The music of the three Cantons is admirably differentiated, but all of it is kept within the same frame, as it were, the air of caution and secrecy that has dominated this final scene from the commencement being consistently maintained.

The groups are greeted by Tell and Walter as they arrive, and the men of Uri address Tell in a strain:



that is taken up by the others and worked up into a massive chorus.

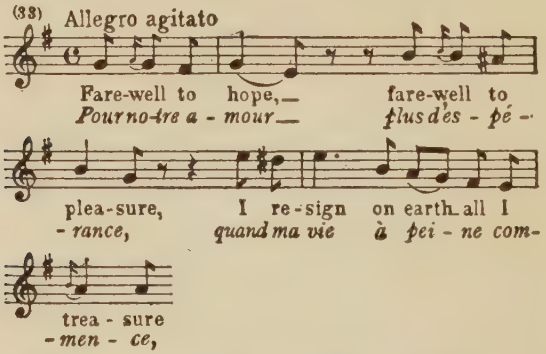
There is still a touch of fear in the hearts of some of the men. William Tell, in a series of vigorous recitatives, reanimates their courage, and he is seconded by Arnold, who, rousing himself from the stupor into which he had fallen, vows that he will avenge the death of his father. At last they all clasp each other's hands, and, led by Tell, they swear to rise against their tyrant, and invoke the wrath of Heaven on any traitor there may be in their midst.

Few scenes in the opera of the early nineteenth century could he counted upon to thrill the audiences of that day as this scene of the Gathering of the Cantons did.

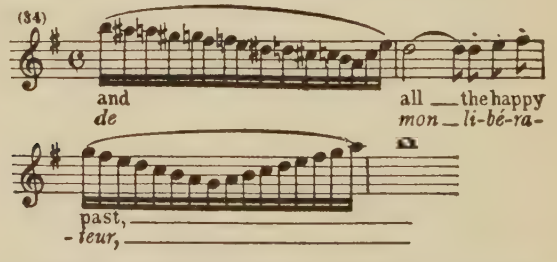
The real heroes of Rossini's opera are of course William Tell and the Swiss people, and it would have been better had the composer and the librettists kept the great national movement in the forefront of their picture, as Moussorgsky did in *Boris Godounov*. But in Rossini's time the main attractions in opera were still the leading soprano and the leading tenor, to each of whom due opportunities for display had to be given.

It is to this convention that we owe the opening scene of the third act, which takes place inside a ruined chapel in the grounds of the Governor's palace at Altdorf. Arnold has come to take farewell of Mathilde; she learns, however, that he is not going

to the wars as he had promised, but is remaining to avenge his murdered father. Mathilde, realising that it was by Gesler's orders that old Melcthal was killed, bids farewell to hope in an agitated aria:


(33) Allegro agitato
Fare-well to hope,— fare-well to
Pour no-tre a - mour— plus dés - pé -
plea-sure, I re-sign on earth all I
- rance, quand ma vie à pei - ne com-
trea - sure
- men - ce,

but, she assures Arnold in some brilliant coloratura:

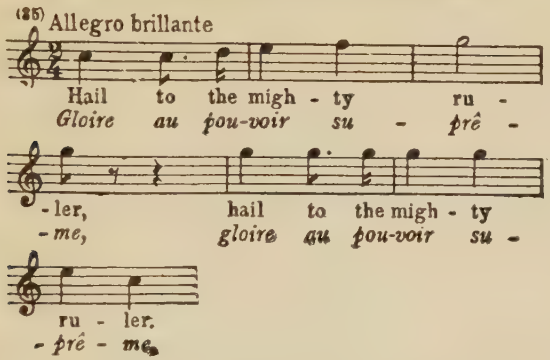


she will always, under the worst blows of fate, preserve the memory of her rescuer and lover.

Wildly she conjures him to flee from the murderous Gesler, but still to remember her in a foreign land. He cries that it is his father that he will remember, and their voices blend in an excited duet, the burden of it being that, in renouncing their love, they have given Melcthal more than their life.

The scene changes to the market place of Altdorf. The occasion is the celebration, at Gesler's orders, of the centenary of the Austrian rule in Switzerland. Gesler's castle is in the background; in front of it is a raised seat for the Governor. In the centre of the

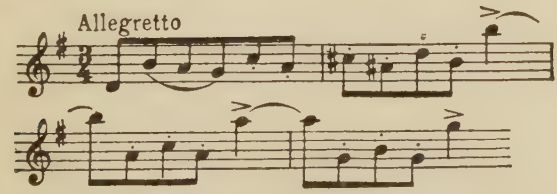
stage is a banner bearing Gesler's arms, and surmounted by a hat. Gesler's soldiers hail him in a martial chorus:


(35) Allegro brillante
Hail to the migh - ty ru -
Gloire au pou-voir su - prê -
- ler, hail to the migh - ty
- me, gloire au pou-voir su -
ru - ler.
- prê - me.

while after them the peasants praise the gentle and beloved Mathilde.

After a proud fanfare in the trumpets, Gesler arrogantly demands that, as a sign of their subjection, the people shall salute the hat as if it were himself; and the Switzers are compelled to file in front of the hat and to bow to it.

Addressing the people from the steps of his throne, Gesler tells them that it is now a hundred years since the Austrian power deigned to exercise its lordship over them: let them accordingly celebrate the occasion with song and dance; "This is my will." This is the cue for a series of brilliant ballets and a march of the soldiers, interspersed with choruses in praise of Mathilde. One of the ballets:



has a genuine Tyrolese flavour.

All goes well until Rudolph notices that William Tell has not done homage to the hat. He roughly orders him to demean him-

self, but Tell refuses. The Switzers at this give an apprehensive cry; and Rudolph draws Gesler's attention to Tell's defiance of his commands.

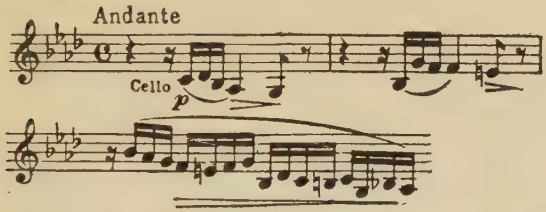
Tell is brought before the Governor, and again refuses to obey the degrading order, let Gesler threaten him as he will. Rudolph now recognises Tell as the malcontent who helped Leuthold to escape across the lake. He is seized by the soldiers: in tender accents he exhorts his little son to leave him, but Jemmy bravely replies that his place is there, to die, if need be, in his father's arms.

After an expressive ensemble Tell bids the boy go to his mother and take the message that the beacons are to be lighted on the mountains as the signal to the three Cantons to raise the standard of revolt. But in the affection of Tell for his child Gesler sees an opportunity to intensify the pleasure of his vengeance. Throughout the land, he says, Tell is known as a skilled archer; let an apple be placed on his son's head; if Tell can pierce the apple with his arrow he shall be set free, but if he fails, both he and his child shall die.

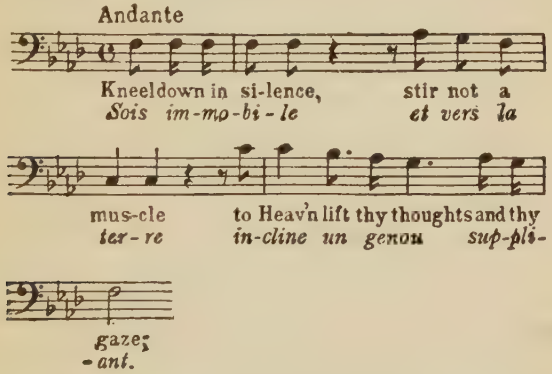
Tell weakens for a moment and appeals for mercy; but when the pitiless Gesler orders the son to be killed he gives way completely and humbles himself before the tyrant; whereupon Gesler taunts the once intrepid archer and boatman with his weakness. It is Jemmy who restores Tell's courage; taking his father's hand and placing it on his breast, he bids him feel how calm his heart is; it will not quail under his father's arrow. Proudly declaring, "I am still William Tell!" the father demands his bow and arrows. Bending down, he selects two arrows, one of which he conceals in his clothes; at this point one of Mathilde's pages slips away and runs towards the castle.

Gesler orders Jemmy to be bound, but the boy proudly refuses; if he is to die he will die free. The Switzers break out into a cry of anguish: even the sight and the words of this innocent child do not disarm the tyrant's vengeance! Jemmy exhorts his father to take courage, and the trembling Tell, his eyes dim with tears, receives permission from Gesler to embrace his son.

A troubled theme in the 'cello:



winds its way in and out of the orchestra as Tell feverishly orders Jemmy to fall upon one knee:



to remain immovable, and to look up and offer a prayer to Heaven. The sight of the arrow may affright his childish eyes; the slightest movement will be fatal; let him think of his mother, who is awaiting them both.

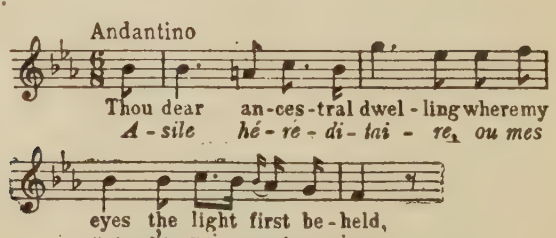
Jemmy returns to his original position, and the apple is placed on his head. Tell gives a dull and hopeless look around him, and as his eyes fall on Gesler his hand almost unconsciously feels for the concealed arrow; then, mastering himself, he shoots, and the apple flies from Jemmy's head. The Switzers give a cry of joy, while Gesler curses this fresh misadventure. Jemmy runs to his father and throws himself into his arms; Tell, blinded by emotion, is hardly able to recognise him. To restore him Jemmy unfastens his mantle, and the second arrow falls to the ground. Tell admits, in reply to Gesler's question, that, if the first arrow had failed, he

had intended the second for the tyrant; and the furious Gesler orders Rudolph to arrest him.

Mathilde enters with her ladies upon a scene of wild confusion, the soldiers clamouring for the death of Tell and Jemmy, the trembling Switzers stammering out their fears, and Gesler gloating over the savage revenge he is contemplating. In spite of Mathilde's protests, he orders Tell and his son to be taken and thrown into a dungeon. But Mathilde puts a protecting arm round Jemmy, and on this point Gesler has to give way.

With regard to Tell, however, he is inflexible; the patriot is to be taken forthwith to the fortress of Kussnach, on the lake, and there thrown into a dungeon, where the reptiles can sate their hunger upon him. The appeals of Mathilde and the Switzers for further mercy are in vain; the infuriated Gesler bids the people disperse, or the prisoner shall be slain at once. Clanking his chains, Tell curses Gesler loudly; and the act ends with the usual imposing ensemble.

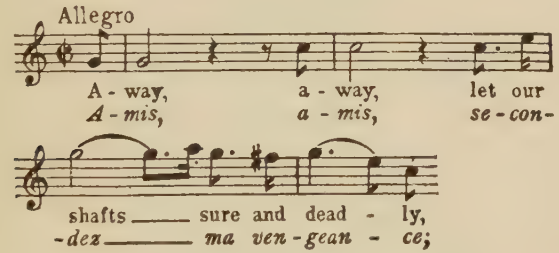
The scene of the fourth act is laid outside the house of old Melcthal. After an agitated orchestral introduction Arnold enters; he has come to revisit his father's house and strengthen his longing for vengeance on Gesler. But in spite of himself, he says, he cannot cross the threshold; his father is dead, yet he cannot enter the ancestral house! We surmise, however, that his real reason for not entering the house is that he has to sing an aria; for the first tenor, like the first soprano, has his inalienable rights. His aria:


Andantino
Thou dear an-ces-tral dwel-ling where my eyes the light first be-held,
A-sile hé-ré-di-tai-re, ou mes yeux s'ou-vri-rent au jour,

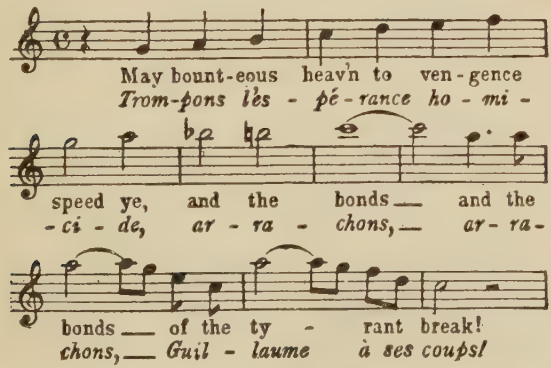
is a dolorous lament over his father and the happy days of his childhood.

After his final roulade, cries of "Vengeance! Vengeance!" are heard from the Switzers behind the scenes. Soon they enter in wild excitement; they have heard that William Tell has been imprisoned, and they are summoning their compatriots to arms to help him.

Arnold encourages them: "No more futile fears! No more sterile tears! Gesler must perish!" He and the other patriots take heart from each other's words, and Arnold, in a final brilliant aria that is soon worked up into an ensemble:



calls upon them to follow him to Altdorf and rescue William from the tyrant's hands. In the course of his exhortation there comes from time to time a soaring phrase:


May bount-eous heav'n to ven-gence
Trom-pons lès - pé - rance ho - mi -
speed ye, and the bonds ___ and the
- ci - de, ar - ra - chons, ___ ar - ra -
bonds ___ of the ty - rant break!
chons, ___ Guil - laume à ses coups!

that must have made an electrifying effect in the great days when tenors were tenors.

The final scene takes place on the shore of the Lake of Lucerne,

Tell's cottage being visible on a hill in the distance. A storm is raging, but the distracted Hedwiga cannot be restrained by the women who surround her from setting forth to see Gesler, to intercede with him for her husband. She is just lamenting that she has neither husband nor child left to her when the voice of Jemmy crying, "My mother!" is heard outside, and the boy himself appears, brought thither by the protecting Mathilde, who is followed by her pages.

Jemmy assures her that, thanks to Mathilde, his father will soon be set free again, and Hedwiga turns to Mathilde with a cry of gratitude. Mathilde returns Jemmy to his mother, praising him as a son worthy of her. Jemmy and Hedwiga take up the strain in turn, and we are treated to a trio for the female voices, in which each singer has proper opportunities to distinguish herself.

Why, asks Hedwiga, has Mathilde, the pride of the court, come to her humble dwelling? Mathilde replies that she is there as a hostage for Tell, whose return she guarantees. But is there any hope, asks Hedwiga, of his rescue from Altdorf? It is only then that she learns that Tell is not at Altdorf, but on the lake — the lake over which a storm is now gathering. Jemmy goes off to rouse the patriots, while Hedwiga, falling on her knees, offers up a prayer for her husband, in which she is joined by Mathilde and the other women.

Precisely how William Tell has escaped we do not know, but we learn from Leuthold, who now rushes in, that, although the boat is being tossed about by the tempest, Tell's hands are free, and he is handling the helm with his usual skill. All run to his aid. Another storm is painted in the orchestra, and after a while Hedwiga and Jemmy return, bringing with them Tell, who is delighted to see that not only has Jemmy, no beacon being available, given the signal to the patriots by setting fire to the ancestral roof, but has saved his father's bows and arrows from the burning.

Taking them from him, Tell says significantly, "Now, Gesler, thou canst come!" Just then the pursuing Gesler and his soldiers appear on the rocks above. Fitting an arrow to his bow, Tell takes aim at Gesler, who falls dead into the lake. The soldiers fly, and

Hedwiga, Jemmy, and Tell give thanks for their deliverance. Walter Fürst and the other patriots enter; they have been aroused by the signal of the burning house, and have come, they say, to be led against the tyrant. Tell bids them seek his tomb in the lake, but not to rejoice too soon, for until Altdorf is taken their liberties are still not safe.

At this point Arnold and the remainder of the Swiss patriots enter with the news that the castle has fallen, and Arnold presents to Tell the banner that, in the third act, floated in the grounds of the castle. Appropriately enough, the storm has now passed away, and in the clear air the mountains and the lake are seen glistening in the sun. All take the transformation as a happy presage of Switzerland's new-found liberty, and the opera ends with a chorus in praise of freedom.

INTERESTING as Weber's life is in itself, it is still more interesting for the fullness of the light it throws on musical conditions in Germany at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, and on the change to modern conditions in the latter part of his career. Short as his life was, Weber seems to sum up in himself an older and a newer German world. His earliest years were spent in much the same *milieu* as Mozart's; when he died, the German operatic stage was practically set for the entry of Wagner.

For a long time before Carl Maria's birth the Weber stock seemed to have been trying to produce a musical genius. It was a breed with plenty of vitality and a certain amount of musical and dramatic talent, and was no doubt fairly represented by the two male representatives of it that immediately preceded the composer.

The family had at one time been of some standing in Austria, but by the middle of the eighteenth century had come down in the world, and from having estates of its own was reduced to taking service on the estates of others. It always prided itself on the "von" in its name — the composer's father was particularly proud of it — and this symbol of petty nobility generally gave Carl Maria a certain social standing, and at times may have made his path in life rather smoother than it might have been without it.

We first meet with Carl Maria's father, Franz Anton, and the latter's brother, Fridolin, when both were in the service of the Elector of the Palatinate, who maintained an excellent theatre

and an exceptional orchestra at Mannheim. Fridolin, who soon gave up the stage for a legal post, became the father of Mozart's future wife, Konstanze, and of that Josefa Weber who married the Vienna actor Hofer and sang the part of the Queen of Night in the first production of *The Magic Flute;* Mozart and Carl Maria von Weber were thus cousins by marriage.

Franz Anton, a vain, handsome, bumptious, pleasure-loving, restless young man, left Mannheim to fight in the Seven Years' War. He was wounded at Rossbach, left the army, and was given a post at Hildesheim in the civil service of the Elector of Cologne. In 1758, at the age of twenty-three, he married Maria Anna von Fumetti, a maiden a year or so younger than himself, the daughter of the departmental chief; and Fumetti having obligingly died shortly before that event, Franz Anton, in addition to getting a nice little dowry with Anna, stepped into the old man's official shoes. Just as at Mannheim, where he had been engaged to sing and make music, he pined to be at the wars, so now that he had official duties to perform he neglected them for his fiddling. In the course of time he became so unsatisfactory to his employer that in 1768 he had to be pensioned off.

For some years yet he remained at Hildesheim, but in 1773 he resolved to take the road as musician and actor, dragging his wretched family everywhere with him. Poor Maria Anna, her father's fortune long since squandered by her crazy husband, died in misery in 1783.

It had always been Franz Anton's desire to see one or other of his children turn out to be some such musical genius as Mozart was; and to this end he betook himself to Vienna in 1784 in order to place his two elder sons as pupils of Haydn. The boys were lodged with a family named von Brenner, one member of which was a pretty daughter of sixteen, named Genofeva. The fifty-year-old Franz Anton married this girl in August 1785 and took her to Eutin, where he had been domiciled for some time, and where he now obtained the somewhat humble post of town musician.

On the 18th December, 1786, there was born to him a son, Carl Maria, a child so sickly that he was four years old before he could

walk; he suffered from a disease of the right hip-bone that in after-life lamed him permanently.

Franz Anton, who by this time had come down very much in the world, dragged his second wife about with him and a company of vagrant players from town to town as he had done his first. In 1797, after years of wandering, they found themselves at Salzburg, and there, in the following year, the poor young Genofeva, worn out with hardships and disappointments, died of consumption. In less than a year the irrepressible old Franz Anton was engaged to a widow named von Beer, but for some reason or other he did not this time get as far as matrimony.

In pursuance of his pet scheme for raising a genius in the family, he forced his youngest son's musical education from the first. Carl Maria soon became a good pianist, sang prettily, and composed profusely in an amateurish kind of way; it is true he had lessons in harmony and counterpoint from various teachers, including, when he was about eleven years old, Michael Haydn (the younger brother of the more famous Joseph), but he received nothing like the rigorous grounding that Leopold Mozart gave the little Wolfgang. Franz Anton wanted quick and spectacular results.

At the age of thirteen the boy was initiated into the mysteries of lithography by Aloys Sennefelder, the inventor of that art, and a friend of Carl Maria's father. In Sennefelder's case, necessity was certainly the mother of invention. As no publisher could be found to undertake the printing of his literary works, he looked about for a cheap means of reproducing the written page himself, and hit upon the process of transfer from stone. Franz Anton thought he saw not only money in the new invention but an easy way of giving his wonder-child's compositions to the world; and the boy took to lithography with such enthusiasm that he managed to improve on the inventor's idea at certain points. But his father and Sennefelder quarrelled, and the association came to an end.

While the Webers were in Freiberg in Saxony, in November 1800, Franz Anton managed to bring about a performance of his

son's juvenile opera, *The Forest Maiden,* but neither there nor at Chemnitz, where it was given a fortnight later, did the work make any impression. Nor had he any better luck with *Peter Schmoll and his Neighbours* (Augsburg, 1803); the final "number" in this ultimately became the final chorus of Weber's last opera *Oberon,* while the overture to *The Forest Maiden* was later used for *Silvana.*

The boy was turning out a good deal of music at this time, and the proud father must have been more certain than ever that he would prove to be a second Mozart. In 1803 he took him to Vienna and placed him in the care of the Abbé Vogler — one of the strangest figures of the day, half genius, half charlatan, who enjoyed an enormous reputation in certain musical circles and was heartily despised in others. He assuredly had a great influence on Weber, both in 1803 and later. In the summer of 1804 Vogler was asked to nominate someone for the post of conductor at the Breslau Opera. He recommended his pupil Weber, and thus at the age of seventeen and a half the boy found himself suddenly placed in a position of considerable authority.

He remained in Breslau until the autumn of 1806. He naturally had difficulties with the singers and players, some of whom resented having so young a man set over them; and perhaps, in his youthful reforming zeal, Weber was not always as tactful as he might have been. But he did excellent work, insisting on thorough rehearsal for every opera he produced, and he learned a good deal that was to be useful to him later. He was obviously predestined for the stage, though some years were to elapse before he could fully realise himself there as either composer or conductor.

In 1805 he nearly came to a premature end by drinking some corrosive acid used by his father for experiments in engraving. The careless old man had left the bottle on the same table as a flask of wine; a friend who had called on Weber by appointment fortunately arrived in time to summon a doctor, but Weber's throat and mouth were terribly burnt, and his singing voice never regained its former power or quality.

He was always romantically susceptible to women, and in

Breslau he became entangled, largely out of chivalry, with an unhappily married woman singer connected with the theatre. She seems to have been the first cause of the heavy debts he gradually accumulated, and that hung like a millstone round his neck for years.

In the autumn of 1806, through the instrumentality of a Fräulein von Belonde, maid of honour to the Duchess Louise of Württemberg, he was invited to visit the Duke and Duchess at their seat in Carlsruhe, Silesia. The Duke was one of the many German princelings of the time who maintained in their feudal states a theatre and an orchestra of their own. Weber's affairs had been going badly before this: he had given up his post at the Breslau theatre, and on account of the war with France pupils had become very scarce. A concert tour as pianist that he had planned fell through for the same reason.

The kindly Duke accommodated not only the composer but his father and his aunt, and Weber spent some happy weeks at Carlsruhe making music with the Duke and the ladies of the Court. Even when the Duke had to leave to join the army the Duchess delayed as long as possible the breaking up of the happy circle. But as the winter wore on, the economic consequences of the war became more and more serious, till in the end the Duke was forced to disband his theatrical and musical forces. He made whatever provision was possible for each of them, and Weber he recommended to his brother, Duke Ludwig of Württemberg, who was just then in search of a new private secretary. Weber reached Stuttgart, where Duke Ludwig lived, on the 17th July, 1807. The two years and a half that he spent there were useless to him as an artist, but were the turning-point in his life as a man.

The situation at Stuttgart was a peculiar one. The King (Frederick, husband of Charlotte Matilda Augusta, daughter of George III of England) was a coarse and brutal egoist who sacrificed the whole kingdom to his pleasures, squeezing every thaler he could out of his subjects, and often ruining the countryside with his hunts without paying the unhappy peasants anything in compensation.

Württemberg was at that time in alliance with France, and there was a heavy drain on the manhood of the little State to provide the army with soldiers. As no one could count on exemption unless he happened to be in the service of the Court, the natural result was that Court posts of the most nominal kind were eagerly sought after and handsomely paid for, the money going into the pockets of a few crafty and unscrupulous favourites of the King.

Frederick, in spite of the economic troubles of the country, maintained an enormous Court establishment, the sole pursuit of everyone connected with it, from himself downwards, being pleasure. He was essentially an able man, but incurably coarse in his speech, violent in his temper, and crudely overbearing in his ways. He was almost unbelievably corpulent: he projected so far in front that it would have been impossible for him to feed himself at table had not a space been cut in the board to accommodate the promontory.

The great thorn in his flesh was his brother, Duke Ludwig, a man of some fifty-one years when Weber made his acquaintance. Ludwig's hopes of becoming King of Poland having been frustrated, he had settled down in Stuttgart with a wife and large family; there he lived as extravagantly and dissolutely as his brother, who detested him cordially, and whom he plagued incessantly for money.

Weber was not accredited to Ludwig in any musical capacity; he was to be simply the Duke's private secretary and comptroller of the household. He had to raise money when and how he could, use his diplomacy to stave off importunate creditors, and, when necessary, squeeze something out of the reluctant King to pay the Duke's debts and provide for his pleasures.

The King, as we have said, had no liking for this troublesome and expensive brother of his, and he soon conceived a strong dislike for his emissary; he disgorged unwillingly when pestered by Weber for money, and vented his spleen in the foulest language on the head of the poor secretary. The young man detested him with equal ardour, and one day, unable to bear his insults any

longer, he played a prank on him that might have had very serious consequences. Leaving the King's presence one day in great irritation after an unusually stormy scene, in which he had been bespattered with insults, he was accosted by an ill-favoured old woman who asked him where the room of the royal washerwoman was. " There," said Weber, pointing to the door through which he had just come. The King, as it happened, hated to be anywhere near old and ugly women. He fired some of his choicest curses at the frightened creature, who told him she had been sent in by the young gentleman who had come out. Weber was at once arrested and imprisoned, though Duke Ludwig's influence soon obtained his release.

The King bided his time, and a year or so later found the opportunity to strike a decisive blow. Weber's father, then nearly seventy-five, had suddenly descended on him in the spring of 1809: he was as proud and vain as ever, but with less control over himself now than he had ever had; it seems likely, indeed, that neither physically, mentally, nor morally was he quite normal.

One day towards the end of 1809 Weber discovered, to his horror, that his father had misappropriated a sum of money that the Duke had handed to his secretary to pay off a mortgage on his Silesian estate; the old man had already sent the money to Carlsruhe to liquidate some of his own debts. Carl Maria begged one Höner, the landlord of a tavern in Schweiberdingen, to lend him 1,000 florins, but was refused. The malversation of the funds being discovered by the Duke, there was nothing for Weber to do but to tell him the whole story and promise repayment as soon as possible. Shortly afterwards one of the Court servants, Huber, approached Weber and told him that he could get him the desired loan from Höner if he himself (Huber) were paid a small commission. Weber foolishly made the agreement and received the money without asking just how it had been raised.

As it turned out, the knavish Huber had gulled Höner with the story that for the sum of 1,000 florins he would use his influence with the Duke's secretary to save Höner's son from being drafted

into the army; and when, in spite of this, the boy was called up in the following January, Höner naturally made a fuss about it.

The affair came to the ears of the King, who was in a state of perpetual fury over the evasions of military service that he knew to be practised, and the secret cause of which he suspected to be Court bribery and corruption. He was rejoiced to find that at the bottom of the flagrant case that had just been brought into the light of day was the detested secretary of his detested brother.

On the night of the 9th February, while Carl Maria was in the theatre, making arrangements for the forthcoming production of his *Silvana,* he was arrested by gendarmes. The next morning he was brought before the King. The story was told in outline by Weber's son, Baron Max von Weber, in the biography of his father that he published in 1864–6, but it was only a few years ago that the Württemberg palace archives were consulted by a more recent biographer for further light on the case.

Weber's rooms had been searched while he was under arrest, and he was now asked to account for the presence there of two silver candelabra and other articles belonging to the Duke; according to Baron Max they had been lent by the Duke to his secretary. When the case of Höner was gone into, it soon became evident that the Duke himself was deeply concerned in the whole scandal of evasion of military service; and it was no doubt the necessity of saving his brother's face that made the King reluctantly break off the proceedings and send Weber back to prison.

The young man found hardly a friend anywhere: the Duke no doubt thought it imprudent to interfere, and even the young actress, Gretchen Lang, with whom Weber was deeply in love, deserted him in the hour of his need.

On the 18th February the King, unwilling to stir up any more muddy waters in connection with the Höner affair, ordered Weber's release; but he was promptly re-arrested on the application of his many creditors. These, in the end, saw the wisdom of accepting his promise to repay them when he could; it seems probable, too, that the King, who was anxious to get rid of Weber, gave the creditors a hint that it would be indiscreet on their part

to insist on his being sent to the debtors' prison and kept there indefinitely. So Weber and his father were sentenced to perpetual banishment from Württemberg, and on the morning of the 26th February, 1810, they were conducted to the frontier by a police official, their sole possessions being some personal linen and forty gulden. The official, however, secretly handed Weber another twenty-five gulden that had been raised by the one friend, Danzi, who still believed in him.

He had lived a hectic life in Stuttgart, and, as we have just seen, had piled up fresh debts there. The experiences of this February were a lesson to him and a blessing in disguise. He pulled himself together sharply and resolved henceforth to regulate his life rationally, not to put his trust in either princes or women, and to devote himself to his art.

On the day of his deportation he began a diary that he kept up almost without intermission to the day of his death; on the last day of this year, 1810, he wrote in it: "Since with the 26th February a new epoch in my life began, I regard that date as the beginning of the year for me. God has indeed given me many vexations and adversities to contend with, but has always brought me into the company of good men who made life worth while for me again. Truly and tranquilly I can say that in these ten months I have grown *better:* my sad experiences have taught me; I have at last become regularly industrious."

From Stuttgart he went for a time to Mannheim, where he met Vogler again, and began a lifelong friendship with one of the Abbé's pupils, the young Jacob Meyer Beer (son of the rich Berlin banker Beer), who was afterwards known to fame as Giacomo Meyerbeer. On the 17th September, 1810, Weber's opera *Silvana* was produced at Frankfort before only a small audience, the town having been drawn to the superior attraction of a balloon flight by one Madame Blanchard.

A charming one-act opera by Weber, *Abu Hassan,* was given at Munich on the 4th June, 1811, with great success. A concert tour in company with the celebrated clarinettist, Bärmann, for whom Weber wrote several works, was interrupted for a while by a

sojourn at Gotha, at the Court of the eccentric but art-loving Duke Emil Leopold; then the tour was resumed, and in February 1812 the two artists found themselves in Berlin, where *Silvana* was given on the 10th July. Weber's father had died on the 16th of the previous April. From September to December was spent in a return visit to Gotha, and after a short visit to Leipzig Weber arrived in Prague on the 12th January, 1813.

In Prague a new phase of his life was to be accomplished. He was invited by Liebich, the manager of the local opera, to become musical director of that institution, which for some time had been on the down grade. Weber accepted the post, and soon showed that, apart from composition, his true *métier* was that of operatic conductor and producer. By unremitting work and the utmost rigour with himself and his forces he soon achieved a high standard of performance, though naturally the loftiness of his ideals and the strictness of his discipline made many enemies for him in the theatre.

While he was thus developing rapidly as an artist, however, he had still some way to go before he could achieve mastery of himself as a man. In spite of his good intentions he became entangled with an actress named Therese Brunetti, the wife of a dancer belonging to the company. Therese was completely self-seeking, immoral, and unscrupulous, and not even faithful to Weber, for she distributed her favours wherever there was a good market for them. Torn between love and contempt for her, Weber passed a miserable time, and there is no saying how the affair might have ended had not a certain Caroline Brandt come upon the scene.

This young singer had played the chief part in *Silvana* on its first production in Frankfort in 1810; she was then between seventeen and eighteen years old. Weber engaged her, purely on her artistic merits, for the Prague Opera, where she made her début on New Year's Day, 1814.

Gradually the modesty and virtue of the young girl, and the simplicity of her home life with her mother, began to exercise a charm on Weber; and after a final disillusionment as regards the worthless Therese Brunetti he was accepted as Caroline's lover.

Whether, at first, he contemplated going as far as matrimony seems to be doubtful, judging from a letter of his to his friend Gänsbacher of the 15th July, 1814, in which he speaks of his fondness for " Mlle Caroline Brandt," but assures his friend that he is still of his old opinion that if an artist is to give his whole soul to his art he must be a celibate. The pair became formally betrothed, however, in 1815.

The course of their love ran anything but smoothly for a considerable time, for Weber's prospects were not particularly brilliant, and neither Caroline nor her mother took kindly to his demand that on marriage she should cease to appear in public; while Caroline seems to have been at this time of rather a touchy nature, and to have found plenty of causes for sharp criticism of and disagreement with her lover.

During 1813 and 1814 Napoleon's power was visibly declining, and the new German aspiration towards independence found vent in a great number of patriotic poems, the most striking of which were those of the young Theodor Körner, who was killed in the battle of Gadebusch in 1813.

In 1814 Weber set some of Körner's poems to music that at once became recognised everywhere as the one predestined musical expression of them. These settings were taken to the heart of the German people, and especially of the students, and were a strong factor in the popularity that was before long to come Weber's way. A patriotic cantata of his, *Kampf und Sieg* (*Conflict and Victory*), written to celebrate the victory of Waterloo (18th June, 1815), was not performed until the 22nd December of that year, at a concert in Prague for the composer's benefit.

A difference of opinion between the theatre committee and himself led to his giving up his post at Prague in April 1816, the resignation to take effect at the end of the following September. During his three and a half years in the town he produced sixty-one operas, thirty-one of them being novelties.

The reasons for his resignation were set forth in a letter to Liebich that has recently been published for the first time. He draws the impresario's attention to the many difficulties of the

post: the *personnel* of the institution is not first-rate, yet the public is always demanding something new; the consequent strain on the conductor has been immense, and his health will bear it no longer; further, this incessant routine labour in and about the theatre leaves him neither time nor energy for imaginative work, and as "it seems to me a higher thing in art to work as a composer for the whole world than to labour as musical director for the pleasure of a particular public, I must not let the years in which my strength may still remain in me slip by unused."

He has taken especial care, he says, to leave the property of the opera and the documents relating to it in such perfect condition that his successor will be able to see his way clearly from the commencement; and he ends by saying that though his contract entitles him to the usual three months' holiday he will be satisfied with only an occasional brief visit to Carlsbad.

Evidently Weber, where art was concerned, was one of those incurable idealists whose self-sacrificing instincts and passion for perfection are taken advantage of and exploited by people with a stronger sense of reality. He had grossly overworked himself in Prague, to the serious damage of his health; in later years he was to overwork himself in Dresden to such an extent as to bring him to his death before he had reached his prime.

The Intendant of the Berlin Opera, a sincere admirer of his, Count Brühl, tried to induce the King of Prussia to take Weber into his service as Kapellmeister, but the traditions of the Prussian Court in music were predominantly Italian, and moreover Weber's musical association with the movement for popular freedom did not commend him to the King, so that the latter passed the German over in favour of the Italian Spontini.

Weber went to Berlin in June to superintend the rehearsals of his cantata *Kampf und Sieg*, and though the success of the work was enormous — even the King being compelled to admire it — his petition for the title of Royal Court and Chamber Composer (which would have been useful to him in the concert tour he was then planning) was rejected. Brühl, in a memorial to the King, ventured to lay stress on the fact that Weber "is undoubtedly

one of the first among living German composers, and as a conductor there are few who can compare with him anywhere, while in Berlin there is not one who can come near him"; but the royal reply was that the granting of the title might raise in Weber expectations which there was no prospect of being realised. For the moment, then, Brühl, who never wavered in his devotion to Weber, could do no more.

The direction of the Leipzig Opera was offered to Weber, but this he declined. In Carlsbad, in July, he met Count Heinrich Vitzthum, the Intendant of the Dresden Opera, who had ideas for the encouragement of German opera in the Saxon capital, and knew that Weber, both by the pronouncedly German quality of his mind and his great gifts as conductor and organiser, was the man he and the cause needed. He ultimately managed to secure Weber's appointment at Dresden, and after a visit of Weber to Prague in September, in which vain attempts were made to induce him to resume his theatrical work there, he arrived in Dresden in January 1817.

In the preceding November he had completed his A flat and D minor piano sonatas and other works, and Caroline Brandt, who had been singing in "guest" parts in Berlin, realised for the first time, by the great honour in which Weber was evidently held there, that this lover of hers was actually a great man — not merely a gifted operatic conductor, but, in many people's opinion, the man of the hour so far as German opera was concerned. The future, then, seemed to Weber and her particularly promising.

But in Dresden the disillusionment soon began. The Court traditions in music had been Italian ever since the middle of the eighteenth century, and the royal house being Catholic by religion, the association with Italy was exceptionally close. The King and the Saxon aristocracy had no sympathy with the democratic attempt to found a German Opera. The Court was honeycombed with Italians, and the Italian influence in the opera-house was all-powerful, the German *Singspiel* (play with music), being banished, as an inferior bourgeois *genre,* to the smaller suburban theatres.

The King's chief minister was Count Einsiedel, a rigid bureaucrat who, like his royal master, looked with uneasy suspicion on anything that savoured of a national spirit in either politics or art; and Weber, as we have seen, had made himself a *persona non grata* to the more reactionary German Courts by his settings of Körner's stirring patriotic poems, that were now in the mouth of every German with nationalist longings.

When Weber arrived in Dresden he found that he was not to be placed on an equality with the Italian Morlacchi as "Kapellmeister," but given the lower title of "Musical Director of the German Opera." He protested to Vitzthum against this slight, but was persuaded to let matters continue as they were until a favourable opportunity should come to assert himself with more chance of success.

He was formally introduced by Vitzthum to the singers and the orchestra, and made a speech in which, after asking for their confidence, he said, "On the other hand, as your leader, I expect from you unconditional obedience: I shall be just, but also, without distinction of persons, inexorably strict towards everyone, and most of all towards myself." While keeping his word in these respects in the theatre, he was friendly enough with his forces in private life.

In comparison with the Italian Opera he had a poor set of singers, especially the women, and the chorus was inefficient. But by the sternest discipline and incessant hard work he brought his material to a pitch of competence that surpassed expectations: he took under his charge not only the singing and the orchestral playing but the stage production; and the orchestra in particular soon realised his superiority to Morlacchi both as conductor and as musician.

He had always had a penchant for literature, and in his Prague days had made a point of preparing the public for a new work or a new production by an elucidatory article in the local newspaper. He opened his first season at Dresden with Méhul's *Joseph,* because that work requires only one female singer and makes little demand on the chorus; and two days before the performance,

which was fixed for the 30th January, 1817, he published in the local *Abendzeitung* an address "To the Art-loving People of Dresden." Such an act on the part of a Court servant had never before been dreamed of; and while the Dresden public realised that the new conductor was going to be a law to himself, the Court looked askance at this spirit of independence.

The story of the next few years is one of eternal struggle inside the theatre and outside it. Bit by bit he raised the standard of performance and made himself the centre of the national ideal in music; but he had to contend with constant intrigue on the part of the Italians and the aristocracy, the cold, immovable, bureaucratic spirit of Einsiedel, and the antipathy or indifference of the monarchy. He repaid the treachery and ill-will of the Italians with courtesy and kindness: when Morlacchi's oratorio *Isacco* was given, he wrote a helpful analysis of it, and again and again he undertook his intriguing colleague's duties for him at grievous cost to his own health.

Weber married Caroline Brandt in Prague on the 4th November, 1817, and brought his bride to Dresden on the 20th December. A couple of months before this, the King, unable any longer to turn a blind eye to his ability and assiduity in the theatre, the Church, and all the Court functions for which music was required, had confirmed his appointment for life.

A girl was born to him in December 1818, but lived only a few months. A son, Max Maria, afterwards a famous railway engineer and his father's biographer, was born on the 25th April, 1822.

In 1810 Weber had come across the story of *Der Freischütz* in Apel's *Gespenter Geschichten* (*Ghost Stories*), and was so taken by it that he and a friend worked it up into an opera libretto. He was unable to proceed with the composition at that time, however, and the project seems to have faded from his mind. In 1817 the desire to write an opera awoke in him again, and, as luck would have it, during his search for a subject in co-operation with his friend Kind he once more came upon Apel's book. His old enthusiasm for the story revived. Kind put the text together in

quick time in the February of that year, but though the subject occupied Weber's thoughts perpetually it was not until the spring of 1820 that he was able to complete the writing down of the music. The opera was originally given the title of *The Trial Shot;* this was afterwards altered to *The Hunter's Bride;* it was on the suggestion of Count Brühl that in the end it was given the same title as Apel's well-known story.

Brühl had hastened to secure the new work for Berlin. He had not given up hope of placing Weber in the Prussian capital, but his plans in this regard were frustrated by the King's appointment of Spontini; he could be helpful to Weber, therefore, only as composer.

The Italian, who came with a great reputation from Paris, took precedence of Weber with his *Olimpia,* which was produced on the 14th May, 1821; the work relied largely for its effect on the splendour of its spectacle — there were thirty-eight trumpets on the stage in one scene, and the triumphal car was drawn by real elephants — but it failed to attract the public when the first novelty of it had worn off.

Der Freischütz was given on the following 18th June; four hours before the performance was timed to begin the opera-house was besieged. In the packed house were many celebrities, including Heinrich Heine, Mendelssohn, and the novelist E. T. A. Hoffmann; the Court, however, was conspicuous by its absence.

Weber, who conducted the performance, was given a great ovation when he stepped into the orchestra. The brilliant and novel overture was encored. The first act, in which nothing of particular importance seemed to happen, and in which no female characters appeared, was somewhat coolly received; but from that point onward the enthusiasm steadily increased, and at the end there could be no doubt that not only Weber but German art had scored an unexampled triumph. On the very morning of the production of *Der Freischütz* Weber calmly finished the *Concertstück,* which is really a piano concerto with a programme; he played it at a concert he gave in Berlin on the 25th July.

He received about this time an invitation to become

Kapellmeister at Cassel at a salary of 2,500 thalers, but although this was a thousand thalers more than he was getting in Dresden he declined the offer. An application for an increase of his Dresden salary was rewarded by a grudging grant of an extra 300 thalers, Morlacchi being simultaneously given the same increase.

Der Freischütz was given at Dresden on the 26th January, 1822; but though it was as great a success there as it had been in Berlin, the Court would not confer the smallest decoration on him.

His friend Kind, angry at what he thought the excessive praise given to the mere composer of *Der Freischütz* at the expense of the librettist, parted from him and refused to be reconciled, so that for the libretto of his next opera, *Euryanthe,* Weber had to go to one Wilhelmine von Chezy, a local lady whose literary ability was not quite the equal of her ambitions. She put together for him a text so obscure and absurd that the new opera, in spite of a flattering reception at its first performance in Vienna, under Weber, on the 25th October, 1822, had to be written down as a failure.

Weber was exceedingly mortified when the bitter truth had at last to be faced. He had been nettled by some criticisms of *Der Freischütz* in which that work was patronisingly referred to as a *Singspiel:* in *Euryanthe* he wanted to show the world that he had it in him to write a full-length grand opera without any spoken dialogue; and the failure of his new work was a terrible blow to him. His stay in Vienna, however, brought him one great experience — a long and intimate conversation with Beethoven.

In 1820 he had begun a comic opera, *The Three Pintos:* he set this aside to work at *Euryanthe,* and it remained unfinished at his death.

On his return to Dresden, where a second son, Alexander Victor Maria, was born to him on the 6th January, 1825, his health visibly worsened: in the fifteen months between October 1823 and January 1825 he wrote nothing but one small song. In 1824 he received an invitation to write an opera for Paris, a libretto by Desangriers, *The Wrath of Achilles,* being suggested; but the

affair came to nothing. His eyes were bent on England, where he knew he was very popular.

Charles Kemble, the London impresario, asked him to write a new work for Covent Garden, and after the subject of *Faust* had been rejected in favour of that of *Oberon,* the offer was accepted, Kemble agreeing to pay him £1000.

Weber had been told by his doctor that his consumption had by now made such inroads on him that even with complete rest he could hope for only five or six years more of life, while if he persisted in working he would be dead within a few months. He deliberately chose to write and produce *Oberon* in order that his wife and children might be, to some extent, provided for after his death.

With his customary thoroughness he learned English well enough to be able to conduct the correspondence with London in that language. The libretto of the new opera was put together by Planché. Weber began work on it in January 1825. The composition of it was interrupted sometimes by ill-health, sometimes by visits to other towns (he produced *Euryanthe* at Berlin on the 23rd December, 1825), and it was January 1826 before the score was virtually complete.

He set out for England on the 16th February, 1826, in company with Fürstenau, the flautist of the Dresden orchestra, who had promised the anxious Caroline to look after him. After a week in Paris he reached London on the 5th March. He was lodged in Sir George Smart's house in Great Portland Street, where he received every possible kindness and attention.

Weber had heard of the large sums that Rossini had made in England by performing in fashionable houses, and had hoped for similar luck himself. In this, however, he was disappointed, his earnings of this kind being very small. Rossini, besides being the most popular opera composer in Europe, was a man of charming address, who could make himself at home in any society; but the average hostess and her guests found nothing particularly attractive in the sickly little German Kapellmeister. His success with the public, however, was great, both at the concerts that he

conducted and in Covent Garden, where *Oberon* was produced on the 12th April. He conducted eleven further performances himself.

On the 26th May he gave a concert on his own account, but for one reason and another connected with the amusement-life of London it was only poorly attended. The last piece on the programme was the *Euryanthe* overture; after conducting this, Weber collapsed in the arms of Fürstenau. He was taken to Smart's house and anxiously cared for.

The next day he felt so much better that he hoped to be able to attend the performance of *Der Freischütz* that was to be given on the 5th June for his benefit. But it soon became clear not only to others but to himself that if he was ever to see his dear ones again he must give up everything and set out for Germany as quickly as possible; so he determined to leave London on the 6th June.

On the night of the 5th he went to bed at ten o'clock, after having shaken hands with all his friends and thanked them for their love; Fürstenau helped him to undress and would have slept in his room, but Weber rejected the offer. At twelve o'clock, when Sir George Smart's party broke up, the light in his room was already extinguished. The next morning he was found dead in his bed, sleeping peacefully with his right hand under his head; according to the doctors he had been dead some five or six hours.

The grievous news stirred London's sympathies. A committee was formed to raise funds for the embalming of the body and for the funeral, so that nothing need be spent of the money he had so hardly earned for his wife and children. He was buried in the Church of St. Mary, Moorfields, on the 21st June, Mozart's Requiem being sung at the service.

In later years another coffin was placed on his, obliterating the inscription on the plate, so that it was only by the Weber crest on the side that the coffin could be recognised. An English admirer, W. H. Grattan, had a silver plate put on it in 1840.

In the following year a Dr. Gambihler, of Nuremberg, who had visited the tomb in London, issued an appeal to the German nation to bring the remains of the national musical hero back to Ger-

many. This was done in 1844, the body being taken to the Catholic cemetery in Dresden on Sunday the 14th December of that year. A vault had been designed by the architect Semper — a vault in which Weber's second son, who had died of measles, had been buried only a fortnight before. The funeral music for Weber, compiled by Wagner from motives from *Euryanthe,* was performed by torchlight on the night of the 14th. The next day the body was laid in the tomb; speeches were made by Wagner and others, and some music specially composed by Wagner accompanied the burial.

DER FREISCHÜTZ

[Carl Maria von Weber]

DER FREISCHÜTZ is one of the most significant works in the history of German opera.

Most of the German courts had, from the middle of the eighteenth century, shown a preference for Italian over German art, and the court of Saxony was no exception to the rule. Weber's life at Dresden was one long struggle against these musical invaders, who had on their side the royal family, most of the aristocracy, and a fair number of the people. Weber was hampered and humiliated in every conceivable way in his work as director of the despised German opera, and it was only his unquenchable idealism and patriotism that sustained him.

Der Freischütz did not immediately extinguish the Italian influence in Germany, but it gave it a blow from which it never recovered. The new opera was thoroughly German from start to finish, in its subject, its characters, and its settings no less than in its music. The German people delightedly recognised themselves and their own country in it at every point. It summed up for them all their secret aspirations towards an art of their own, and its colossal success was not merely a tribute to the genius of Weber but a symbol of a nation's awakening. The only musical event comparable to the episode in modern Europe is the success of Glinka's *Life for the Czar* in Russia.

Weber first met with the subject of *Der Freischütz* in 1810, in Mannheim, in a collection of tales by Apel. He saw the operatic possibilities of it at once, and at his request his friend Dusch set about turning it into a libretto. For one reason or another, how-

ever, the scheme was dropped for some seven years — fortunately so, for the long interval gave Weber time to mature as a musician.

In Dresden he took the subject up again in 1817, the poet this time being Friedrich Kind (1768–1843), a rather vain and over-ambitious man of letters who for once did something that has kept his name alive. He did not, as is generally supposed, merely work on the basis of Apel, but went back direct to the old folk-tale. He placed the action in the period following the Thirty Years' War, thus avoiding possible difficulties with the censorship on account of some features of the story, and he practically re-created the tale and the characters in a way of his own.

The title first projected for the opera was *The Trial Shot;* later this was changed to *The Huntsman's Bride.* It was apparently on the suggestion of Count Brühl, the Intendant of the Berlin Opera, that almost at the last moment the work was re-named *Der Freischütz.* For this title there is no real English equivalent. Literally it means "The Free-shooter," but that term carries no very definite meaning in English, for which reason it is best to retain the German title. The basis of the story is the pact that certain individuals, according to the saga, were accustomed to make with a sinister figure known as the Black Huntsman, in virtue of which they received, in return for their souls some day, seven magic bullets, warranted to bring down anything that walked or flew. Six of the bullets obeyed the will of their possessor, but the destination of the seventh rested with the Black Huntsman himself.

It took Kind only about a week to do his part of the work, but Weber turned the poem over in his mind again and again before attacking it. It was not until July 1817, more than four months after the text had been given to him, that he wrote the first number, which was the duet between Agathe and Aennchen in the second act. He seems to have worked the music out in detail in his head, going over it time after time, rejecting this, improving that, before setting anything down on paper. Next to nothing of the opera was written during the rest of 1817, the whole of 1818, and the greater part of 1819. It was not until September of this

last year that he settled down continuously to the writing of it. It was finished, down to the overture, in May 1820.

Weber had made the poem his own in more senses than one. At first Kind wanted to share with him whatever profits the as yet unwritten opera might bring. Weber, however, who had had experience of the trouble that this sort of arrangement sometimes brought between collaborators, urged Kind to sell him the book outright, which he eventually did for thirty ducats. When the opera turned out to be so colossal a success, Kind's vanity led him to believe that too little credit for it went to the poet and too much to the composer. Weber generously offered him a portion of his profits, but this the poet refused coldly. The friendly relations between the pair gradually changed to indifference, and finally, on Kind's part, to enmity, so that for the text of *Euryanthe* Weber had to go to another librettist, Frau Wilhelmine von Chezy, who provided him with a book so poor that it has dragged Weber's fine music down with it.

Originally *Der Freischütz* was in four acts. The first consisted of two scenes. The former of these shows a Hermit's house in a forest. Near it is a rough altar, behind which stands a cross, surrounded by white roses. It is nearly evening. When the curtain rises the old Hermit is seen praying before the altar. He has had a dream of the devil lurking in the darkness and stretching out his horrible hand towards an unspotted lamb, Agathe, and then trying to ensnare her bridegroom, Max. The holy man implores the grace of Heaven for the innocent pair. He is just reflecting anxiously that he has not seen Agathe for three days when she appears, bringing him a pitcher of milk, and followed by her cousin Aennchen, who carries a little basket of bread and fruit. Aennchen having gone out, the Hermit asks after Max, and learns that he is uneasy about the shooting trial that is to take place on the morrow. The Hermit tells Agathe that he is anxious in another way for them both. Some danger, he thinks, threatens them — so, at least, he surmises from his dream.

He exhorts Agathe to preserve the purity of her heart, and she, in return, begs him to remember her in his prayers. As she is

leaving him he recalls her; an inner voice bids him not let her go without a gift. He turns to the rose bush, the first cutting of which had been brought to him long ago by a pilgrim from the Holy Land: each summer he collects and presses the leaves, to which the peasantry attribute supernatural powers of bodily healing and preservation from harm. He gives Agathe some of the roses as a bridal gift, and dismisses her with a further exhortation to be simple and virtuous.

Weber appears to have had his doubts as to the desirability of opening the opera with these two scenes, but Kind insisted on their retention, declaring that without them the work would be like a statue with its head cut off. Weber, however, consulted his fiancée, Caroline Brandt, on whose sense of the stage he always relied; and she was emphatic in her judgment. "Out with these two scenes!" she wrote; "plunge right into the life of the people at the very beginning of the opera; start with the scene in front of the tavern."

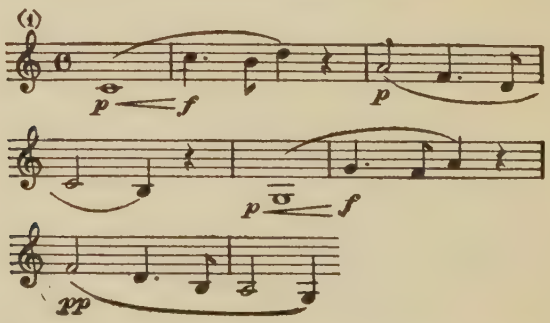
Thus fortified in his own opinion, Weber approached Kind again; he pointed out to him the novelty of the scene at the commencement of the second act, which would make so excellent an opening; to begin with the Hermit would be to give too much importance to a minor character; further, the music he would have to sing would call for a first-class bass, and as a voice of this kind would be indispensable for another of the characters also, and not many German theatres could be trusted to be so rich in first basses, it would be policy to cut these two scenes out entirely. In the end Kind gave in. His pride of authorship, however, made him print the discarded first act in later years, and in 1871 one Oskar Möricke set it to music, using motives of Weber's own. There can be no doubt that the opening of the opera has been improved by the sacrifice of these two scenes; but it is also true that without them the *dénouement* is not of itself fully intelligible.

THE OVERTURE

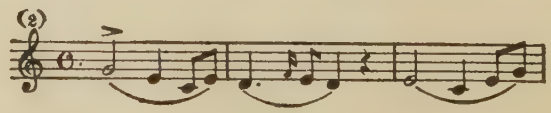
The overture is one of the world's masterpieces of its genre. It was a striking novelty for its time. With rare exceptions, such as Mozart's use of the music of the Supper Scene for the andante introduction to the overture to *Don Giovanni,* composers until then had not drawn upon the themes of the opera. Weber began a new genre with the overture to *Der Freischütz,* without which, in all probability, we should never have had such overtures as those to *Tannhäuser* and *The Mastersingers.*

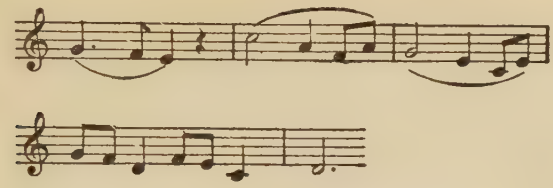
Further, Weber was not only a born musical dramatist but a very original and skilful orchestral colourist; and the overture to *Der Freischütz* has a depth and brilliance and variety of tone to which there was nothing to compare in any previous operatic overture.

It commences with an adagio prelude that breathes the very spirit of the romantic German forest. The strings and wood-wind arrest the attention with a preliminary phrase:

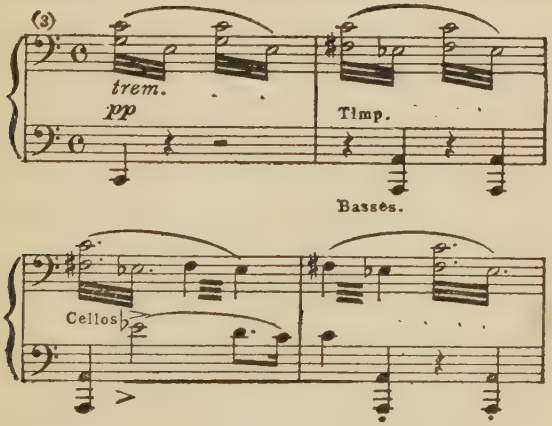


after which, over a soft rustling in the violins, supported by solid harmonies in the lower strings, the horns give out a two-part melody that seems born out of the very nature of the instrument:



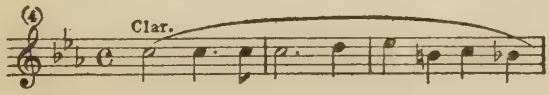


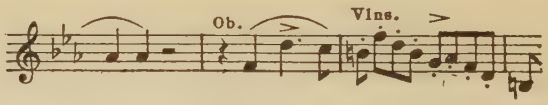
As this dies away, the violins and violas break into a sort of shuddering tremolando, with the clarinets adding their own deep colour to it; the double basses (pizzicati) and the timpani strike in with sinister reiterated notes, and the 'cellos break out into a wail:



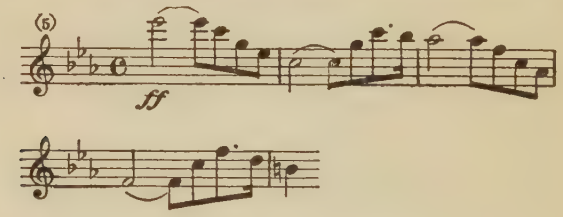
The horror rises to a climax and then dies away almost into silence. In these dozen bars we have already the revelation of a new genius in German opera.

The tempo now changes to *molto vivace,* and after some bars of agitated syncopation, drawn from Max's aria in the first act, at the point at which the Black Huntsman appears in the background, the clarinets give out the melody to which Max sings the words " What evil power is closing round me? "

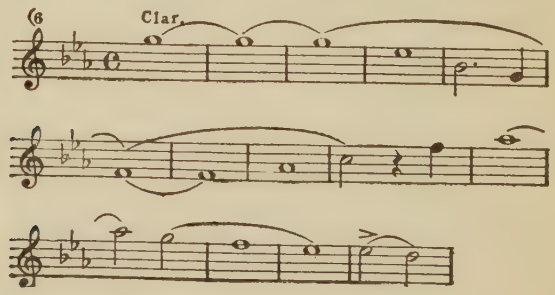




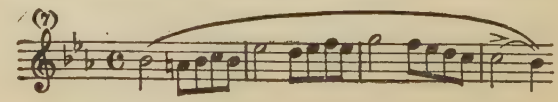
This merges into the theme, given out by the full orchestra fortissimo, to which, in the grisly scene in the Wolf's Glen in the second act, Max cries out his terror at the horrors around him:



This section culminates in a wild upward and downward rush in the strings, flutes, and clarinets, followed by another sinister tremolo in the strings, that is punctuated for a moment by imperiously arresting chords in the horns; then, over the continual tremolo, a solo clarinet gives out, fortissimo and *con molta passione,* a theme that is like a shaft of light suddenly piercing the darkness:



and after a short transitional passage the violins and clarinets sing the melody of the final part of Agathe's aria in the second act:



in which she speaks of her confidence in the ultimate happiness of Max and herself.

We thus have already presented to us the vital essence of the drama — its setting in the depth of the German wood, the intrusion of the powers of evil, the horror and despair of Max, the trustful innocence of Agathe, and the final triumph of simplicity and goodness. The remainder of the overture is a symphonic working-out of the material here shown. After the sinister No. 3 has been heard for the last time there is a dramatic silence for two bars, then a solitary plucked note in the 'cello and basses, then another long pause, followed by a huge crescendo in the full orchestra and a final triumphant statement of Agathe's melody (No. 7), this time in the broad C major tonality in which the overture opened.

ACT I

When the curtain rises for the first act we see an open place before a tavern in a forest. Max is sitting alone at a table in the foreground, with a tankard before him and his gun in his arm. In the background is a target, surrounded by a crowd of peasants. Just as the curtain goes up, Kilian, a rich peasant (bass), is firing at the target; shouts from the crowd — "Bravo! Well fired! Splendid!" — greet his success. Max (tenor), who till now has kept his forehead sunk in his clenched hand, strikes the table heavily and cries, "Good luck, peasant!" while the others break out into a chorus of praise of Kilian. The crowd lines up for a procession, while Max asks himself in a gloomy, puzzled kind of way what has happened to him that his skill as a marksman has deserted him.

A procession is now formed, headed by a band of village musicians playing a rustic March. After them come peasant lads, carrying pewter vessels as trophies; Kilian, the victor in the contest, decorated with flowers and a ribbon, on which is stuck the stars that he has shot from the target; a boy with the remains of the target on a short pole; marksmen, several of whom have stars on their caps, carrying guns; and women and girls. They all march

round, and as they pass Max they point mockingly at him, bow, whisper, and laugh among themselves. At last Kilian stands before him, makes a sign to the others, and breaks out into a derisive song; the others echo his taunts.

Max springs up in a rage, draws his hanger, seizes Kilian by the chest, and orders him to leave him in peace. The others press around him, and just then Cuno, the head ranger, enters with Caspar and several huntsmen with guns and spears. Cuno (bass) demands to know what the trouble is, and Kilian, who has been released by Max, but is still a trifle scared, tells him that all he has been doing is to chaff, in accordance with time-honoured custom, the man who never hits the mark; it has come to something when the peasant beats the huntsman at his own game! Max, in great mortification, has to admit that the charge is true; and Caspar, one of the foresters (bass) who is senior to Max, mutters to himself, " Thanks, Samiel! " (He himself is in love with Agathe, but having been refused by her, he hates her accepted suitor, Max, and has sold himself to Samiel, the Black Huntsman, to get the better of his rival.)

Cuno cannot make it out at all: here is Max, supposed to be the best shot in the place, who has not brought down claw or feather for four weeks. Caspar, who knows quite well why, comes forward with a glib explanation; someone must have cast a spell over Max, and to break it he will have to stand next Friday at a cross-road, draw a circle round himself with his ramrod or a bloody knife, and call three times on the Black Huntsman. Cuno indignantly orders him to be silent: " I have long known you for what you are," he says — " an idler, a glutton, and a cheater at dice. Take care that I don't think still worse of you! " Caspar makes a grovelling apologetic gesture, and Cuno warns him that if he speaks another word he will dismiss him.

Then, turning to Max, Cuno bids him also be careful. He wishes him well, but if he fails to win the prize to-morrow he loses the hand of Cuno's daughter, Agathe, and with it the succession to Cuno's post. Strange to say, the others, though they have heard of the ordeal of the trial shot, do not know precisely how and

why it came about. They appeal to Cuno to tell them the story, which he proceeds to do, for the audience's benefit, no doubt, as much as for that of the people on the stage.

It seems that Cuno's great-great-grandfather (also named Cuno) was one of the Prince's bodyguards. One day the hounds started a stag on which a man was tied — the usual punishment in those days for one who broke the forest laws. The Prince, moved to pity, promised that whoever should kill the stag without wounding the man should be made a hereditary forester and given a house.

The original Cuno, more out of compassion than from a desire for the reward, fired at the stag and brought him down without inflicting any more injury on the man than some scratches on the face from a thorn bush. But, says Cuno with a meaning glance at Caspar, it was then as it is now: the evil one always sows tares among the wheat. The enemies of the former Cuno told the Prince that the deed had been accomplished by means of magic — Cuno must have used a " free " (or magic) bullet. (" I thought so! " interjects Caspar; and then, to himself, " Help, Samiel! ")

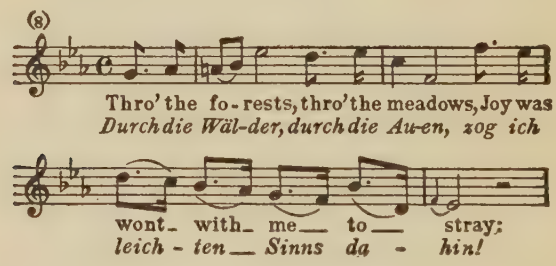
Kilian explains to the others what a " free " bullet is; his grandmother had told him all about them: six hit the mark, but the seventh belongs to the evil one, who directs it where he will. The Prince, Cuno continues, then ordered that each of the original Cuno's successors should undergo a shooting trial on the day when the young man is to marry his betrothed, who must be of irreproachable character and must appear in a virginal wreath of honour. All this having been satisfactorily explained, Cuno breaks up the gathering, telling Max that he expects him again before sunrise at the Prince's house.

(This long conversation, like all the others in *Der Freischütz*, is carried on in spoken dialogue.)

There follows a short ensemble in which Max sings of the foreboding with which he looks forward to the morrow's trial; Cuno bids him collect himself, for everything now depends on his skill; the others add an occasional word of encouragement; and Caspar insinuates a hint that there are other powers than that of his own

hand and eye that he can call to his aid. Cuno shakes Max by the hand, and, with a final heartening word to him, goes out with his huntsmen, who sing a chorus in praise of the hunt. It is growing dark. Kilian, a rough good fellow, wishes Max the best of luck the next day, and invites him into the tavern, to drive away his melancholy with a glass and a dance with the girls; but Max being too depressed for anything of that kind, Kilian and the others leave him, some of them waltzing their way into the inn.

Max, left alone, declares that he can bear his evil fate no longer: for what crime, he asks in despair, is he being made to pay? Then he breaks out into the famous aria " Durch die Wälder ":

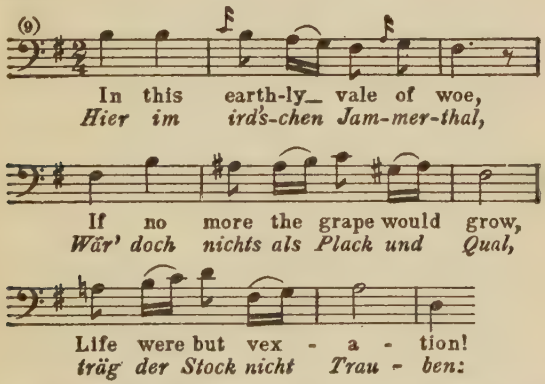

(8)
Thro' the fo - rests, thro' the meadows, Joy was
Durch die Wäl-der, durch die Au-en, zog ich
wont - with - me — to — stray;
leich - ten — Sinns da - hin!

in which he describes how easily life used to run with him — how everything he aimed at fell to his gun, and in the evenings, laden with booty, he would return to find Agathe waiting for him at her window with a loving look. It is now quite dark. " Has Heaven then forsaken me? " he asks, and as he speaks the words Samiel appears from a thicket in the background — a huge figure in dark green and flame-coloured garb, his face a dark yellow, a cock's feather in his hat.

We hear the typical Samiel music in the orchestra (No. 3). Samiel disappears, and Max's thoughts turn again to Agathe, whom he sees in imagination at her open window, waiting for his footsteps, and confident of his triumph; but her gesture of greeting receives no answer. Once more his gloom overmasters him. The orchestra gives out the agitated syncopated figure already so familiar to us in the overture, and to the melody of No. 4 he speaks of his doubts and despair. Will no ray come to pierce the

night in his soul? Does blind fate rule? Is there no God? At his first words of despair Samiel reappears in the background and crosses the stage with great strides; but at the word "God" he gives a convulsive start and disappears.

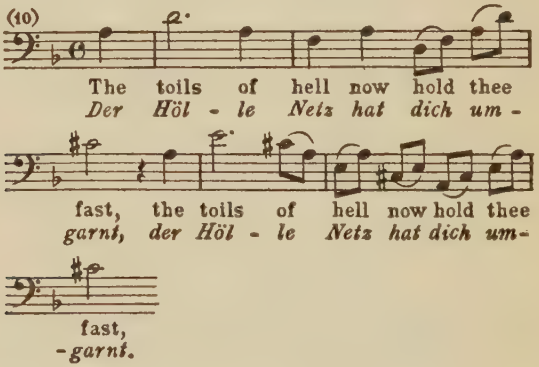
Caspar now enters, accosts Max with assumed good-fellowship, and orders wine from the inn, telling the serving-maid to chalk it up to him, which she evidently does unwillingly and untrustingly. He drops something out of a phial into Max's glass, and mutters his usual "Help, Samiel!" whereupon the Black Huntsman's head looks out from the thicket — much to the terror of Caspar, who ejaculates, "You here?" He assures Max that he was only speaking to himself, and at last forces him to drink by pledging the Head Ranger — a toast which it is impossible for Max to refuse. Then Caspar breaks out into a rough drinking-song:


In this earth-ly_ vale of woe,
Hier im ird'schen Jam-mer-thal,
If no more the grape would grow,
Wär' doch nichts als Plack und Qual,
Life were but vex - a - tion!
träg der Stock nicht Trau - ben:

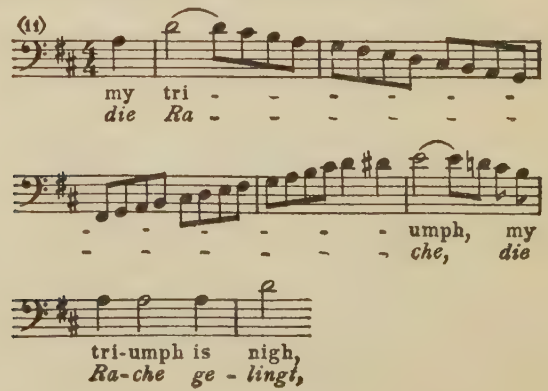
Nor can Max refuse the second toast that Caspar proposes — to Agathe; nor the third — to the Prince.

Max, feeling unaccountably uneasy, would now go home, but Caspar holds him back while he offers to help him to fire a shot that will ensure his happiness and Agathe's the next day. He thrusts his gun into Max's hands, points hastily to an eagle that is a mere speck in the night sky, and tells him to fire. As Max does so a peal of harsh laughter is heard. A huge eagle falls dead at their feet; Caspar plucks out some of its largest feathers and

puts them on Max's hat. How has it been done? asks the astounded Max. Caspar laughs at him — as if Max did not know that this was a free bullet! It was his last, he assures Max; but he knows how to get more; Max must meet him at midnight in the Wolf's Glen. At first Max is appalled at the thought of being in that haunted place at such an hour; but deceived by Caspar's protestations of goodwill, and full of the thought of Agathe, he at last consents. After he has left, Caspar breaks out into an aria in which he calls on the powers of evil to make sure of their coming prey:


(10)
The toils of hell now hold thee
Der Höl - le Netz hat dich um -
fast, the toils of hell now hold thee
garnt, der Höl - le Netz hat dich um-
fast,
-garnt.

and gleefully anticipates his triumph over Max:



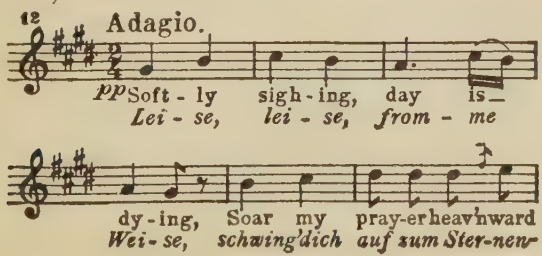
As he leaves the stage the curtain falls.

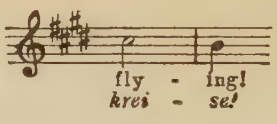
ACT II

The second act opens in a room in Cuno's house in the forest, hung with tapestries and trophies of the chase. On one side of it is a table with a lamp and a white dress trimmed with green. On the wall is a picture of the original Cuno. On the other side of the room from the table is Agathe's spinning-wheel. Agathe, in an undress, has a bandage on her head; we learn that the picture has fallen and hurt her. Aennchen is standing on a stool, hammering in a nail to hold up the picture. She is a care-free girl of unquenchable good spirits and a roguish, teasing disposition, while Agathe, as befits an affianced bride, is much more inclined to sentiment. There is a charming duet between the two, in which each expresses her own character; and afterwards Aennchen sings of the gloom of the old house they are in, and expresses her preference for brighter scenes and a gay wooer.

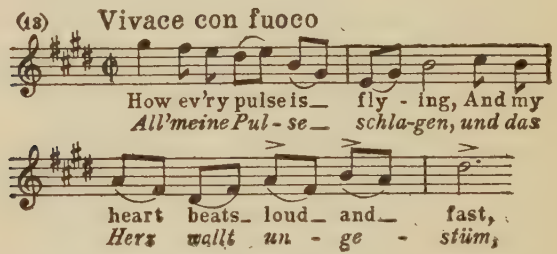
Agathe tells Aennchen of her visit to the Hermit that morning and how he warned her of a danger threatening her: the falling picture and the wound were evidently the fulfilment of his presentiment. She will take care of the consecrated roses he gave her; and to preserve them Aennchen proposes to put them outside the window, in the cool night air. Aennchen would then go to bed, but Agathe refuses to go until she has seen Max.

Aennchen having left her, taking with her the roses, Agathe muses upon the sorrow that always goes hand in hand with love. She draws aside the curtain in front of a balcony and looks out into the starry night. Stepping out on the balcony, she raises her hands in prayer, and breaks out into the universally known aria, "Leise, leise, fromme Weise":



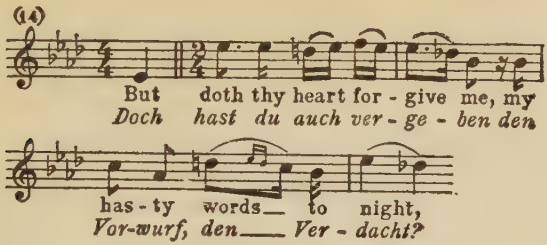


in which she commends herself to the protection of Heaven. Why does Max tarry? she asks. She hears a footstep and sees a form among the pines, and her pulse quickens. Jubilantly she waves a white handkerchief, but Max does not yet see her. Is that a nosegay in his hat, and does it mean that he has been successful in the contest? She returns into the room and gives full expression to her joy and hope:


(13) Vivace con fuoco
How ev'ry pulse is_ fly - ing, And my
All'meine Pul - se_ schla-gen, und das
heart beats_ loud_ and_ fast,
Herz wallt un - ge - stüm,

She sings of her rapture to the strain of No. 7, and turns to meet Max, who enters hurriedly, looking pale and troubled; at the same moment Aennchen re-enters from the other side.

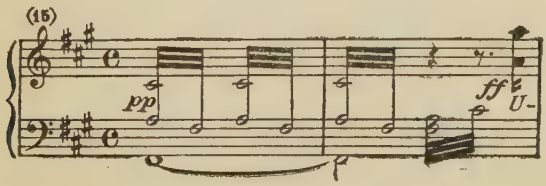
Agathe is a little disturbed to find only an eagle's feather in Max's hat instead of the expected trophy. He tells her that by a marvellous shot he has brought down a great eagle. She explains about the fallen picture and the wound on her forehead, and he protests that he must away at once to the Wolf's Glen; he has shot a stag there in the dusk, he says, and must bring it in, or the peasants may steal it. The two girls are horrified at the thought that he is going to the haunted glen at night, but in spite of their entreaties he takes himself off, only pausing at the door for a tender little duet with Agathe, in which he implores and she grants him forgiveness for having grieved her, while the light-hearted Aennchen comments on the situation in her own fashion:

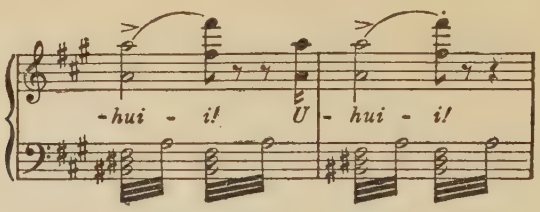


The scene changes to the Wolf's Glen. All that happens from now to the end of the act is in the pure spirit of the German romanticism of the early years of the nineteenth century, when people loved to frighten themselves with the thought of mysterious magic forces at work all round them.

We see a fearsome hollow between high mountains, from one of which a waterfall runs down. The full moon is shining; a storm is gathering. Near the front is a tree blasted by lightning — it has rotted away from the inside, and has a phosphorescent glow; on a gnarled branch a great owl with fiery eyes is sitting; on other trees are ravens and other forest birds.

Caspar, without a hat and in his shirt sleeves, is busy making a circle of black stones, in the middle of which is a skull; a few steps away are an eagle's wing, a bullet-mould, and a crucible. Over a mysterious shudder in the orchestra, a bass chorus of invisible spirits sing on one note, a gruesome snatch about a bride that is soon to die, while other voices break in every now and then with a cry of " Uhui! " which is punctuated by a similar hoot in the wood-wind:





Just as Caspar finishes the circle a clock in the distance begins to strike twelve.

Caspar draws his hanger, and at the twelfth stroke thrusts it into the skull; then, raising the hanger with the skull on it, he cries, " Samiel! Samiel! Appear! " and replaces skull and hanger in the middle of the circle. Samiel appears in a fissure in a rock and asks, " Who calls me? " Caspar grovels before him. His time is up to-morrow: will not Samiel prolong it if he brings him another victim — his friend Max, who is in quest of free bullets? " Six shall make him, seven break him," says Samiel. " The seventh is thine," answers Caspar eagerly: " direct it from his own gun to his bride, and so drive both him and her father mad." Over Agathe, says Samiel regretfully, he has as yet no power; but he is inclined to listen to the proposition so far as Max is concerned, and to grant Caspar another three years' grace if he can ensnare the other. To-morrow it must be he or thou! " This dialogue, sung by Caspar, spoken by Samiel, is carried on to an appropriately descriptive orchestral accompaniment.

Samiel disappears; Caspar rises and wipes the sweat from his forehead. The hanger and skull have disappeared; in their place a small hearth with glowing coals has risen out of the earth. Caspar refreshes himself with a draught from his hunting-flask; the coals burning low, he throws faggots on them and blows on the fire; the owls and the other birds, as though in sympathy, raise and lower their wings, and the fire smokes and crackles. Max now becomes visible on one of the rocks; he bends down towards the glen, and in a recitative describes his horror at the darkness, the ghostly forms, the whirring night birds, and the blasted tree.

Determined that nothing shall daunt him, however, he climbs

down a little way and stares fixedly at the opposite rock, where, in the moonlight, stands the spirit of his mother, clothed in white. " Thus she was in her coffin," he says in terror; " thus she lies in her grave! With a warning glance she implores me to go back! " Laughing nervously at his fears, and calling aside on Samiel for help, Caspar bids him look again, when he will see better what it was that frightened him. The figure of his mother disappears, and in its place stands the form of Agathe. Her hair is loose, she is strangely decked out with straw and leaves: she has the air of one distracted, and seems as if she were about to throw herself down into the waterfall. Crying out that he must follow her, Max descends to where Caspar is, whereupon the form of Agathe vanishes.

" Here I am," says Max; " what is it I must do? " The moonlight grows dimmer. Fortifying him with a draught from his hunting-flask, but refusing to drink himself, Caspar tells him to come within the circle, which, he says, is a sure wall against the spirits, whether of heaven or of hell. Whatever Max may see or hear he is to remain calm; if someone came to help him, even were it a black rider on a black horse, striking fire from his hooves, what would that matter? Not without some disturbance can the hidden powers be brought to bestow their treasures on mortals. Only when he sees Caspar himself trembling is Max to come to his aid and repeat his call — otherwise they both will be lost.

By now the moon has sunk to a mere point in the night sky. Caspar picks up the crucible, orders Max to watch him, that he may learn the art, takes the necessary ingredients from his pouch and throws them in one by one, enumerating them as he does so: " First the lead; some broken glass from church windows, which can easily be got; some quicksilver; three bullets that have already found their mark; the right eye of a hoopoe; the left eye of a lynx. *Probatum est!* And now a blessing on the bullets! " To the sinister chords shown at the commencement of No. 3 he prostrates himself three times to the earth and invokes Samiel, exhorting him to " bless the deed, seven, nine, and three, that the bullets mighty be."

To an appropriately hair-raising tremolando in the strings of the orchestra, and eerie cries in the wood-wind, the contents of the crucible begin to ferment and hiss, and give out a greenish-white flame. A cloud passes over what is left of the moon, so that the only light on the scene now comes from the fire on the hearth, the eyes of the owl, and the putrescent wood of the tree.

" One! " says Caspar, as he casts the first bullet and drops it out of the mould; and an echo repeats the word, as it does all the later ones. Night birds fly down, gather round the circle, and hop about flapping their wings.

" Two! " A black boar crashes through the thicket and runs panting across.

" Three! " says Caspar, now greatly agitated. A storm rises, breaks the tops of the trees, and sends sparks flying from the fire.

" Four! " Caspar counts anxiously. The rattling of wheels, cracking of whips, and trampling of horses are heard. Four wheels, throwing out fiery sparks, roll across the stage, so rapidly that neither their real shape nor the coach they carry is visible.

" Five! " says Caspar, still more nervously. The barking of dogs and the neighing of horses fill the air, and in the heights there is a rush of ghostly hunters on foot and on horseback, with stags and hounds; invisible voices sing in chorus on one note, accompanied by a pelting rhythm in the orchestra. " Woe! Woe! " cries Caspar: " the wild chase! " The scene becomes completely dark.

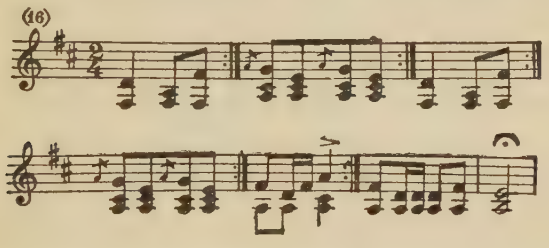
" Six! Woe! " cries Caspar. The sky becomes completely black. The hitherto contending storms crash together and burst with fearful lightnings and thunders. Rain falls in torrents. Dark blue flames spring from the earth; will-o'-the-wisps appear on the hills; trees are torn up crackling by the roots; the waterfall foams and rages; pieces of rock are hurled down. From every quarter there comes a tumult in the air; the earth seems to totter.

" Samiel! Samiel! Help! " shrieks Caspar convulsively. " Seven! Samiel! " Caspar is thrown to the earth. Max, who is also tossed hither and thither by the tempest, leaps out of the circle, seizes a branch of the blighted tree and screams, " Samiel! " The storm begins to die down. Samiel, the Black Hunter, appears where the

tree was. He seizes Max's hand and cries in a terrible voice, " Here I am! " Max makes the sign of the cross and falls senseless. In the distance a clock strikes one. There is a sudden silence. Samiel has disappeared; Caspar is still lying with his face to the earth; Max raises himself convulsively, and the curtain falls.

ACT III

The third act commences with a vivacious orchestral introduction, in the course of which we hear a merry tune in the horns:



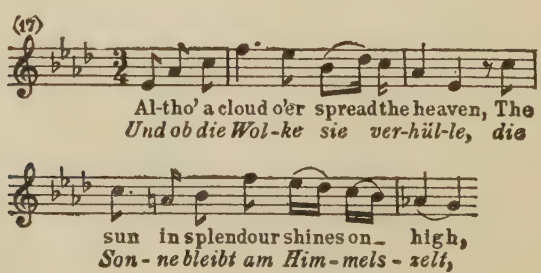
When the curtain rises we see a wood, bathed in sunlight. Two of the Prince's huntsmen enter. They congratulate each other on the fineness of the day that has followed so fearful a night: in the Wolf's Glen especially, they think, the devil himself must have been loose; branches the thickness of a man have been split like canes, giant firs are turning up their roots towards the skies; everyone knows whose work that was! Max, somewhat heated, enters with Caspar. The two couples greet each other, and one of the huntsmen tells the other, aside, to be polite to Max, who has just fired three marvellous shots; if he goes on like that he will one day be head master of the hounds.

The pair having gone out, Max turns feverishly to Caspar and demands the lucky bullets. " Three for me, four for you! " says Caspar; " could a brother divide more fairly? " " But I have only one," says Max. " The Prince had his eye on me. I made three wonderful shots. What have you done with the bullets? " Caspar takes two magpies out of his hunting-pouch and throws them behind a bush. " You see," he says, " two have gone on these. What

do I care about the Prince's game? " " But you still have another bullet," says Max urgently; " give it to me." " I should be a fool," replies Caspar; " one for me, one for you; I am keeping it for you for the trial shot." " Give me your third! " cries Max passionately. " I can't! " says Caspar.

Max is beside himself; but just then a third huntsman enters and tells him that the Prince wishes to speak to him at once; there has been a dispute as to the range of his gun. When he has left, Max once more urgently demands the third bullet of Caspar, who refuses to give it to him even if he were to beg for it on his knees. Max calls him a rascal and hastens away. " Well and good! " says Caspar when he is alone. " Soon the sixth bullet will be fired " (he loads his gun), " and then the seventh for the trial shot! Ha ha! Splendid! May the lovely bride get it! There's a fox out over there: let him have the sixth in his skin." He raises his gun to his shoulder as he goes out, and the shot is heard as the curtain falls.

In performance the foregoing scene, which is carried out entirely in spoken dialogue, is often omitted; and the third act commences with the next scene, which takes place in Agathe's chamber in the forester's house — an old-fashioned room, but neatly furnished. On one side there is a little domestic altar, upon which stands a vase containing the bouquet of white roses. Agathe is alone; she is in a white bridal costume with a green band in her hair. When the curtain rises she is kneeling at the altar; then she rises, comes forward, and in a tone of fervent piety breaks into a deeply-felt aria:


(17)
Al-tho' a cloud o'er spread the heaven, The
Und ob die Wol-ke sie ver-hül-le, die
sun in splendour shines on_ high,
Son-ne bleibt am Him-mels-zelt,

in which she expresses her confidence in the loving protection of Heaven.

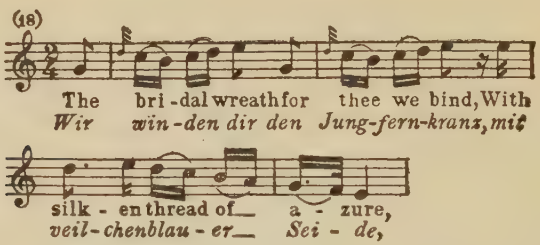
When she has finished, Aennchen enters, also in bridal dress, but without any flowers. (It is important that neither Aennchen nor any of the other bridesmaids should carry flowers, so that Agathe, for her bridal adornment, has to take the holy roses, that confer immunity against the magic bullet.)

The sprightly Aennchen rallies her more serious friend in the usual way. She notices that Agathe has been crying: well, " bridal tears and morning showers, according to the proverb, don't last long." And speaking of rain, there has been enough in the night to wash the old house away. " And Max," said Agathe, " in the wood in all that tempest! " She has had a fearful dream — that she was changed into a white dove, flying from branch to branch. Max fired at her and she fell; but the white dove had vanished, she was Agathe again, and at her feet a great black bird of prey lay weltering in its blood!

Aennchen claps her hands. " Charming! Charming! " she says. It is all very easily explained. Last night Agathe was working late at her wedding-dress, and no doubt she was thinking of it before she went to sleep: that accounts for the white dove. She had started back from the eagle's feathers in Max's hat: that explains the bird of prey. Agathe, however, is not so easily pacified, so Aennchen, anxious to turn her mind from its gloomy thoughts, sings her the story of how her old aunt once had a fright: just as she was going to sleep she saw and heard a monster creeping towards her with eyes of fire, rattling a chain. She called for help, but when the servants came with lights they found it was only Nero, the watch-dog.

Agathe, at this unexpectedly absurd *dénouement,* turns away in vexation, but gradually yields to Aennchen's loving entreaties to be happy in the thought of what the day is to bring her. Then Aennchen runs off to fetch the bridal wreath, which she has left below. As she is going, the door opens, and the bridesmaids enter, whom she tells to cheer up the bride. This they proceed to do in the famous " Jungfernkranz " (Bridal Wreath) chorus

that quickly became one of the melodies that every German knew:

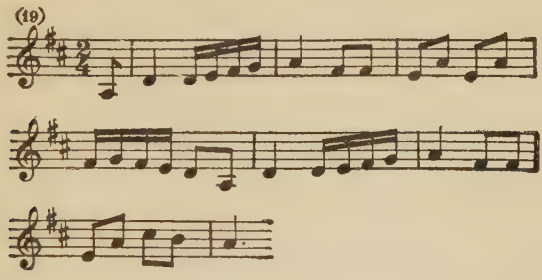

(18)
The bri-dal wreath for thee we bind, With
Wir win-den dir den Jung-fern-kranz, mit
silk-en thread of a-zure,
veil-chenblau-er Sei-de,

Aennchen, returning with the box containing the wreath, brings the news that ancestor Cuno has been at his pranks again: he has fallen from his nail a second time, and Aennchen has nearly tripped over him. Agathe sees another evil omen in this, but Aennchen asks her what was more likely to happen on such a night as last, when the house was shaken from top to bottom by the wind. Kneeling before Agathe and presenting the box to her, she starts the chorus off on their song again.

They have hardly begun, however, before they are interrupted by a startled cry from Agathe. She has opened the box, and found in it only a silver wreath for the dead — a mistake on the part of the old servant who had been sent to the town for the wreath. The bridesmaids are embarrassed: Agathe is distressed at this fresh omen of evil; she recalls once more the Hermit's foreboding. Aennchen takes the Hermit's white roses from the vase and binds them into a garland; then, bidding the bridesmaids begin their song again, she takes Agathe by the hand and leads her through the door, the others following in couples.

The scene changes. Hunting-horns are heard in the orchestra, and, the curtain having risen, we see a romantically beautiful landscape. On one side are the tents of Prince Ottokar, where the court notabilities and guests are banqueting; on the other side are the huntsmen and beaters, also feasting; behind them are piled-up heaps of game. Prince Ottokar is seated at table in the principal tent; Cuno is at the bottom of the table. Max is standing near Cuno, but outside the tent, leaning on his gun; on the opposite

side Caspar is watching behind a tree. A vigorous hunting chorus is sung, to a melody that has already been heard in the introduction to the third act, prefacing No. 16:



The music is worked out with an appropriate wealth of colour, especially in the horns, No. 16 also being drawn upon for refrain.

The Prince then rises and recalls the company to the serious business of the day. He approves Cuno's choice of a son-in-law; the young man pleases him. He tells Cuno to bid Max be ready, which the old forester does with a sign. "But where is the puppet?" says Caspar to himself, adding his customary, "Help, Samiel!" He climbs up into the tree and looks around. Ottokar turns to Cuno and asks him where the bride is; he has heard so much good of her that he is keen to make her acquaintance. Cuno tells him that she should be here presently, but asks whether the trial shot may not take place *before* she comes; the young lover has been a trifle unfortunate of late, and the presence of the bride may unnerve him.

The Prince laughingly remarks that Max seems to be hardly cool enough for a huntsman: "When I was watching him from a distance he fired three master-shots; but since I had him called he has done nothing right." Cuno has regretfully to admit that this is true, though, he adds, until quite lately Max was the best shot of them all. The genial Prince doubts whether Cuno and himself would have done any better on their wedding-day, but all the same the old custom must be adhered to. Raising his voice so that Max may hear him, he smilingly asks Cuno whether he has not an older huntsman to whom the preference used to be given.

While Cuno, in some embarrassment, is stammering a reply, Max mutters to himself, " Caspar has perhaps still his last free bullet. He might perhaps — " and then he hastily loads his gun, and ejaculates, " Once more and never again! "

Ottokar tells Cuno that the time has come to settle the matter, and he turns to Max with a " Come, young fellow! One shot like the three you fired this morning, and you are safe! You see that white dove on yonder branch? It's an easy mark. Fire! " Just as Max raises his gun to his shoulder, Agathe, Aennchen, the bridesmaids, and others come into view, just where the white dove is sitting. Agathe cries out, " Do not fire! I am the dove! " The bird rises and flies towards Caspar's tree; Caspar hastily climbs down. Max fires at the dove, which flies away. Agathe and Caspar both give a shriek and fall to the ground, and the chorus break into a cry of horror.

Agathe is picked up and led to a small mound in the foreground; Max falls on his knees before her. She soon recovers consciousness, and all give a joyous shout of " She lives! Praised be the powers above! " Then attention is directed to Caspar, who is struggling convulsively, bathed in his own blood. " I saw the Hermit beside her," he says; " Heaven has won, my time has come! " Agathe is by now sufficiently restored to join with Max in a brief duet, which is taken up by the rest of the company.

Meanwhile, unseen by these, Samiel has risen from the earth behind Caspar. " Thou, Samiel, here already? " Caspar asks. " Is this how thou keepest thy promise to me? Take then thy prey! I defy my doom! " Then, raising his hand, " Accursed be Heaven! And accursed be thou! " He falls to the earth in a convulsion, and Samiel vanishes. All are horrified at this strange last prayer of a dying man; but they agree that Caspar was always given to evil ways, and that the judgment of Heaven has at last overtaken him. The Prince orders them to take the miscreant's body and throw it into the Wolf's Glen, and a few of the huntsmen carry it away.

Then the Prince turns to Max, and in grave tones charges him to clear up the mystery. Max kneels before him and makes his

humble confession of wrong-doing — the four bullets he has fired that day were " free " bullets, cast in association with the dead Caspar. All are astonished and shocked. The Prince angrily banishes him for ever from his dominions; never shall he have Agathe's pure hand.

Max breaks out into reproachful self-pity, and Cuno and Agathe both intercede for him, the chorus later supporting their plea. But the Prince is immovable: Max must either flee the land or go to prison. Just then the Hermit enters majestically, and all salute him respectfully, the Prince baring his head: if this is the holy man of whom he has heard such good report, he will be guided by him; let the Hermit, then, pronounce judgment.

The Hermit, to slow and solemn music, preaches them a little sermon on the fallibility of all mankind and the virtue of tolerance; which among us has the right to throw the first stone at any sinner? Let the trial shooting be abolished from that day, and as for Max, since his heart was always good and true, let him be put upon a year's probation; after that, if he is what he used to be, let him be given Agathe's hand. The Prince consents; Max and Agathe blend their voices in a cry of gratitude and hope; and the whole company express their satisfaction in a chorus based on the melody of Agathe's air in the second act, that has played so large a part in the overture (No. 7).

AMBROISE THOMAS

CHARLES LOUIS AMBROISE THOMAS, one of the masters of French operetta, and with a certain gift for bigger things, was born at Metz on the 5th August, 1811.

His father and mother, both of whom were musical, kept a school of music, and it was from them that he received his first instruction in the art, commencing at the age of four; at seven he took up the violin and the piano. In 1828 he entered the Paris Conservatoire, his master for the piano being Zimmermann, the father-in-law of Gounod. He won the first piano prize in 1829, the first harmony prize in 1830, and the Prix de Rome in 1832. Among the compositions he sent to the Conservatoire from Rome, in accordance with the conditions of the prize, was a duet that earned the praise of Berlioz in one of his *Gazette Musicale* articles.

In Rome, and during the years immediately following his return to Paris, he composed a quantity of chamber music, some songs, a Requiem Mass, and other works; but, as with all French composers until comparatively recently, the only road to fame and fortune for him lay through the theatre.

Influence obtained for him in 1834 an introduction to the Opéra-Comique, where he made his début with the one-act operetta *La Double Échelle*. This was successful, and between that year and 1860 he produced a large number of operas, operettas, and ballets at both the Opéra-Comique and the Opéra.

The most successful of these works were *Mina* (1843), *Le Caïd* (1849), and *Le Songe d'une Nuit d'Été* (1850). In the first of these there were no choruses and no bass or baritone soloist, the three men's parts being all written for tenors. *Le Caïd*, a sprightly

and musicianly work, had a great vogue for more than thirty years: a critic of the time aptly characterised Thomas's muse as "a well-brought-up young lady who elects to play the *cocotte*." In *Le Songe d'une Nuit d'Été*, Queen Elizabeth was presented as in love with Shakespeare. *Raymond* (1851) ran for only thirty-four performances, the opera being dragged down by its libretto, which was an absurd version of the story of the Man in the Iron Mask.

Thomas may have been partly consoled for the failure of *Raymond* by the fact that a few months previously he had been elected to the Institut in the place of Spontini, who had died in January of that year. Among the other ten candidates for the vacant seat was Berlioz. Thomas received thirty votes, Niedermayer five, Batton three, and Berlioz not a single one.

From 1837 to 1851 Thomas had produced a new stage work practically each year. Others followed in 1853, 1855, and 1857, and then, perhaps feeling a little tired and discouraged, he was silent for nearly six years. He had no great hopes of the success of his next work, *Mignon* (17th November, 1866); at the final rehearsal he assured a friend that the opera would not run to fifty performances. His pessimism, however, was groundless. The new work proved to be a great favourite from the first: on the evening after the production he happened to be at a concert in the Cirque des Champs-Élysées, where the audience rose to its feet to applaud him. *Mignon* turned out to be one of those works that make the fortune both of the author and of the theatre; by 1894 it had had a thousand performances at the Opéra-Comique alone.

Thomas never quite managed to repeat this colossal success, though *Hamlet* (1868) became very popular also. The part of Ophelia in this was created by Christine Nilsson. Hamlet, in the original version, was a tenor; but the chief tenor at the Opéra-Comique — Gueymard — proving unequal to the rôle, Thomas turned the part into one for a baritone, to be played by the celebrated Faure, who achieved a triumph in it.

Auber died in 1871, and Thomas, thanks to the success of *Mignon* and *Hamlet*, was elected to succeed him as Director of the Paris Conservatoire. His administrative duties seem to have

taken up an undue proportion both of his time and his energy, and after *Hamlet* he did little creative work of any importance. Partly by reason of the inane treatment of Dante's famous story by the librettists, partly because of the weakness of the music, *Françoise de Rimini* (1882) was a complete failure; the Prologue to the opera alone had a touch of the old quality about it. Thomas had no better luck with the ballet *La Tempête* (1889), which soon disappeared from the stage.

He was the first composer to live to see the thousandth performance of one of his works. As an old man of eighty-three he was present on the 13th May, 1894, at the thousandth performance of *Mignon* at the Opéra-Comique, when he was given an ovation by a distinguished audience. The grand cordon of the Legion of Honour was conferred on him by the President of the Republic, he being the first musician to receive that high dignity. A medal, reproducing the famous Mignon of the painter Ary Scheffer, was struck in commemoration of the celebration.

On the evening following the thousandth performance of *Mignon* there was a gala performance at the Opéra-Comique. The programme, apart from the *Marseillaise,* consisted entirely of Ambroise Thomas's works, including the *Raymond* overture, a duet, and a chorus from the *Songe d'une Nuit d'Été* (sung by the soloists and chorus of the Opéra-Comique and a number of Conservatoire pupils), a cavatina from *Raymond* (sung by the tenor Clément), the always popular Gavotte and some vocal numbers from *Mignon,* two arias and a chorus from *Psyché,* and a ballet and a scena from *Hamlet.*

In the last twenty-five years of his life Ambroise Thomas became very serious and self-centred and very much of a solitary: one of his contemporaries described him at this time as a " Verdi solennel." His mind ran a good deal on the idea of death, and a quarter of a century before the end came he had prepared a granite tomb for himself on a storm-swept island off the Breton coast that he had bought. He died in Paris on the 12th February, 1896, and was given a public funeral at Montmartre, an eloquent funeral oration being pronounced by Massenet.

MIGNON

THE story of *Mignon* was derived, though somewhat remotely, by the French librettists from the novel of Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship and Travels,* upon which Goethe commenced work in 1777, though the book was not completed till nearly twenty years later, in 1796.

Partly by reason of the time its composition had taken him, partly because he had no gift for construction in this kind of work, the telling of the story is extremely confused; the strangest of incidents happen, and they link up with each other in the strangest of ways. But if Goethe could not design a novel he had an exceptional insight into character, and the majority of the portraits in the book are vital to this day. Widely as the French librettists have departed from the original, some knowledge of this is necessary to an understanding of the opera.

Wilhelm Meister is a young man who, after a disillusioning love-affair with an actress named Mariana, goes out into the world in search of happiness, wisdom, and knowledge of himself and others. His tastes are in the direction of the theatre, and he himself experiments later both as actor and as author.

During the course of his travels he falls in with two stranded actors, Laertes and Philina, the latter a light-hearted coquette who takes nothing seriously, living solely for flattery and pleasure. She is one of Goethe's most convincing figures; a curious thing is that though he credits her with hardly a single admirable trait, and though scarcely any of the other characters in the book have a good word to say for her, she makes a decided appeal to us.

Later Wilhelm meets with a company of rope-dancers, who have with them a mysterious young creature whom, at first, Wilhelm has difficulty in pronouncing to be either boy or girl. As a matter of fact she is a girl in boy's clothes. " He reckoned her about twelve or thirteen years of age; her body was well-formed, only her limbs gave promise of a stronger growth, or else announced a stunted one. Her countenance was not regular, but striking; her brow full of mystery; her nose extremely beautiful; her mouth, although it seemed too closely shut for one of her age, and though she often drew it to a side, had yet an air of frankness, and was very lovely. Her brownish complexion could scarcely be discerned through the paint."

To the questions of Wilhelm and Philina she gives curt, enigmatic answers. When they ask her name, she replies, " They call me Mignon." When asked how old she is, she answers, " No one has counted." To the question, " Who was thy father? " she replies, " The Great Devil is dead." One day the master of the rope-dancers beats her because she will not perform the egg-dance; Wilhelm rescues her and buys her from the showman for thirty crowns. All that the man can tell him is that she fell into his hands at the death of his brother, who, by reason of his skill in his profession, had been called the Great Devil.

Wilhelm takes the child about with him and begins to educate her, though nothing will induce her to change her boy's clothes for those of a girl. Though he does not know it, she is deeply in love with him, and suffers agonies when other women, such as the flirtatious Philina, pay him attention.

One day Wilhelm hears her sing a song — " Know'st thou the land where lemon trees do bloom? " — that is a cry of longing for some mysterious land of sunlight, thick with myrtle and laurel, and where there is a large house with a tall pillared porch, and marble statues in the hall that look down on her. Each stanza of the song ends with the cry, slightly varied, " 'Tis there, 'Tis there! oh my beloved, I with thee would go! " Wilhelm, after questioning the child, comes to the conclusion that the land of which she speaks must be Italy, but he can get no more out of her.

Another mysterious character who joins the company is an old Harper, the victim of an incurable melancholy; he too sings a number of songs that have become treasures of German poetry, and, like those of Mignon, have been set to music by several of the great German song writers.

Wilhelm afterwards meets with a company of actors, with whose productions he associates himself. Among them is a woman named Aurelia, who has with her a little boy named Felix, with whom Mignon forms a close companionship. One day the house is discovered to be on fire, and in a vault in the garden Mignon comes upon the old Harper, who, after having lit some straw, is on the point of sacrificing Felix with a knife. The Harper is taken charge of by a clergyman, and is visited from time to time by a physician, who can extract from the melancholy old man no information about himself; the physician, however, discovers that he is oppressed with a sense of guilt, fancies that he brings misfortune wherever he goes, and believes that death, to be unwittingly brought about by a boy, is constantly impending over him.

Later Wilhelm goes to reside in the castle of a gentleman named Lothario, in whose neighbourhood lives a certain Natalia, who, by one of those extraordinary coincidences that abound in the story, turns out to be the sister of a boy named Friedrich, who, in the earlier part of the story, has been the jealous slave of Philina. Wilhelm also meets one Theresa, to whom Mignon and Felix (the latter, by the way, has meanwhile turned out to be the son of Wilhelm and Mariana) are sent to be taken care of.

Natalia has original ideas on the education of little girls, a number of whom she constantly has about her. On the birthday of two twin sisters among these, she plans a little tableau in which the girls, as a reward of virtue, are to receive a present from an angel. Mignon is dressed for the angel's part in a long white dress, with a golden girdle round her waist and a golden fillet on her hair. When the tableau is over she refuses to let them divest her of her angel's robe, and sings a beautiful little song that has been set to music by various German composers, but by none so touchingly as by Hugo Wolf:

" Such let me seem till such I be;
Take not my snow-white dress away;
Soon from this dust of earth I flee
Up to the glittering land of day. . . ."

Finding Wilhelm one day in the arms of Theresa, Mignon clutches at her heart and falls dead. She is buried, with great ceremony, in a room in the castle, and an Abbé who is of the company injects " a balsamic substance " into her veins, so that, as she lies in the angel's dress, she seems to be only asleep. The Abbé tells them that in her last days she used frequently to kiss an image of the Crucified which was tattooed on her right arm. He raises the dead girl's sleeve to show the company this, and an old Italian Marchese recognises Mignon as his niece.

Later he tells them the whole strange story. The Harper, it seems, is his long-lost brother Augustin. Their parents had also had a daughter, Sperata, whose birth, however, had been concealed, the child being brought up in the country, and only an old friend of the family (whose child she was given out to be) and the confessor were in the secret. Augustin and Sperata, not knowing their true relationship, had fallen in love with each other, and Mignon was their child.

After vain attempts by their friends to separate the pair, Augustin had been decoyed into a cloister; yet although they had managed to convince him that Sperata was his sister, he refused to give her up. From Sperata the secret was kept, though the confessor had induced her to consent to a separation from Augustin, having convinced her that her union with a priest (for such Augustin was) was a sin. The child was taken from her and committed to the charge of a family that lived on the sea-shore; there the wild little thing led a life of the greatest freedom, climbing the rocks, running down to the ships, and delighting to change clothes with boys. She would run away for miles into the country, and her guardians would think she was lost; when she returned she would stop to rest at a large country-house in the neighbourhood, where she would run up and down the great hall, looking at the statues.

One day she went out and did not return; her hat was found swimming on the water, and it was supposed that in clambering up the rocks she had fallen into the sea. As a matter of fact, she had, as we know, been kidnapped by the rope-dancers. In the course of time, Sperata died, and Augustin escaped from the cloister. He had already become subject to melancholia, and was perpetually tormented by an illusion in which he saw a boy standing at the foot of his bed, with a bare knife, threatening to kill him.

In the later stages of the story the Harper is cured; he divests himself of his long beard, and goes about clothed and in his right mind. From the clergyman's laboratory he has taken a bottle of laudanum, and this figures in a mysterious episode in which Felix is at first thought to be poisoned, though a lucky accident has saved him. The next morning Augustin is found lying dead in bed, having cut his throat with a razor; it seems he had found in the Abbé's room a manuscript in which his story was recorded, and, filled with horror, he had poured laudanum into a glass of milk, intending to drink it. But a feeling of revulsion had come over him; setting down the glass untasted he went out into the garden, and on his return found Felix filling up the glass out of which he had apparently been drinking.

It had so happened, however, that the boy had drunk from the milk bottle, not from the glass, and had at first told a fib about it, because he had previously been scolded for touching the bottle.

If all this seems somewhat incoherent, the reader is asked to lay the blame to the charge of Goethe, who, as has been said, though an admirable painter of character, constructed a long story with difficulty. Let us now see the form the story of Mignon assumes in the opera.

Of Goethe's many characters only seven remain, and the names and natures of two of these are changed in a way that is a trifle confusing at first. Wilhelm, Laertes, Philina, and Mignon remain very much as we know them already, except that their mentality has become considerably more French than German; Wilhelm in

particular is no longer the earnest, brooding, self-questioning young Teuton of the original, but an elegant young man of the Parisian *beau monde.*

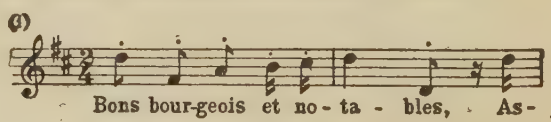
In Goethe's story there is a certain Jarno, a curious, cynical figure whom we first meet as the man of affairs of a certain Count in whose house the actors are engaged to give a performance, and later as the confidant of Lothario. In the French opera there is no corresponding character, but the name Jarno is given, for some mysterious reason or other, to the chief of the gipsies who have possession of Mignon. By a similar freak of fancy the name Lothario is given to the Harper. To crown all, the opera has, as we shall see, a doubly happy ending.

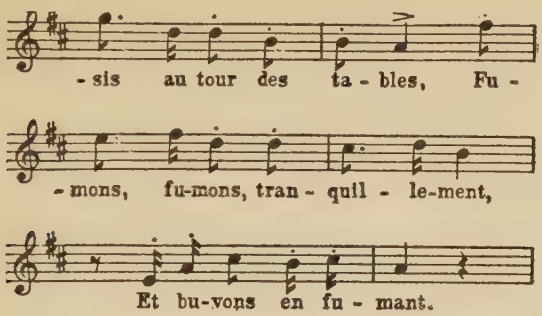
THE OVERTURE

The overture is, in the main, a pot-pourri of some of the leading melodies of the opera. It begins with a slow introduction, in which, after a hint of Mignon's unhappiness, and a succession of arpeggios that may no doubt be taken to have reference to the Harper, we hear the melody of Mignon's song, " Know'st thou the land? " (see No. 12). This is followed by the brilliant Polonaise sung later by Philina (No. 21), with its gay after-strain (No. 22).

ACT I

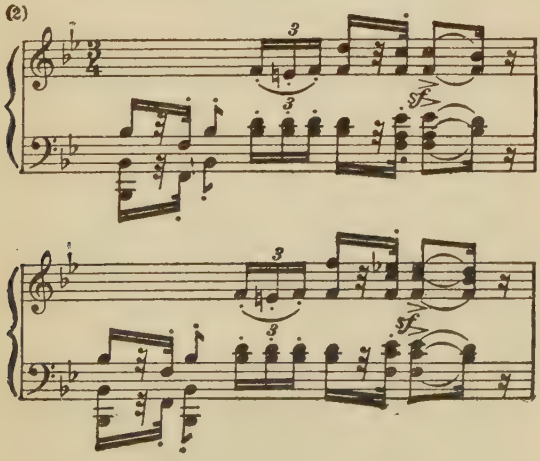
The curtain rises, to some lively music, on the courtyard of a German tavern, where, seated at tables, drinking and smoking, the worthy citizens of the place are enjoying themselves. The inn is on the left of the stage; a flight of steps runs up from the courtyard to a balcony, from which a little door with a glass window gives access to the first floor of the inn. To the right is a shed. While the citizens are singing their festive chorus:





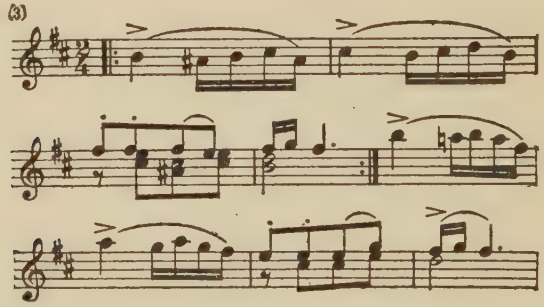
a harp is heard preludising, and soon Lothario, the old Harper, appears upon the scene. He tells us in his song — which he accompanies upon his harp — that he wanders from place to place searching for the child who, he feels in his heart, still lives. The citizens know the old wanderer well; they make him sit down with them, fill his glass for him, and break into their chorus once more.

A number of peasants of both sexes now break in, bidding the others make room for the gipsies, who make their appearance to the accompaniment of a gay march in the orchestra:

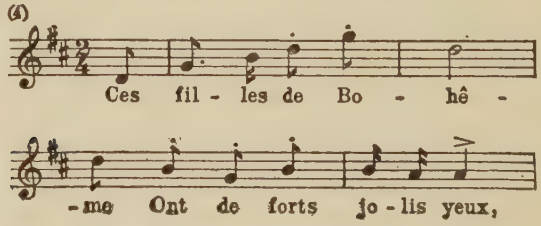


Two ragged gipsies drag in a cart containing the poor possessions of the troupe; at the back of the cart Mignon is sleeping on a sheaf of straw.

One of the gipsies takes a violin and motions to the others to commence the dance, which is accompanied by oboe and tambourine:

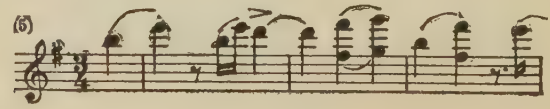


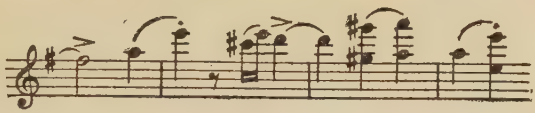
Some of the older citizens comment ecstatically on the beauty of the eyes of the gipsy girls:



and swear that their own wives could not dance better. Laertes and Philina have meanwhile come out upon the balcony to see the show, and Philina, who is in a state of perpetual effervescence, carols light-heartedly to the rhythm of the dance.

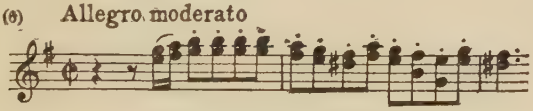
The bagpipe-like *loure* to which the gipsies have been dancing changes to a waltz:





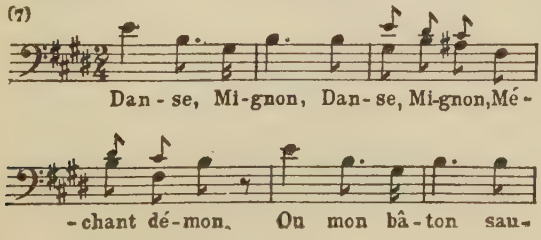
the strain of which is taken up by Philina, while the chorus also join in from time to time. The spectators throw money to the performers; and Jarno, having thanked them, promises that Mignon shall now perform her egg-dance.

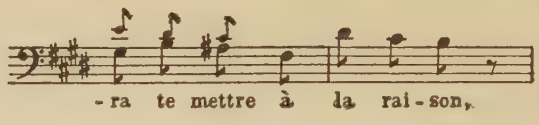
He orders Zafari, the fiddler, to "produce his best concerto," and the others to spread their finest carpet on the ground; then, approaching the cart and waking Mignon, he bids her get up and begin. To appropriate music:



one of the gipsies spreads a wretched faded old carpet on the ground, and on this a boy places several eggs. Mignon, holding in her hand a bouquet of wild flowers, comes down from the cart and advances to the centre of the stage. Philina, from the balcony, asks Jarno what this poor child is who seems to be cursing the gipsy for having awakened it; is it a boy or a girl? "Neither the one nor the other, fair lady," replies Jarno; "it is neither boy, girl, nor woman; it is Mignon"; whereupon Philina and the others laugh heartily.

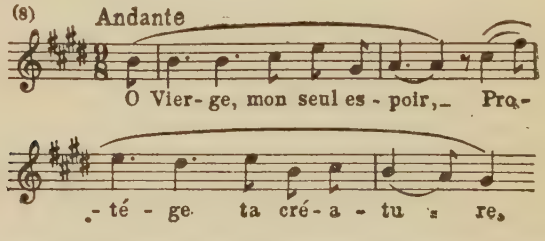
The unhappy Mignon, perturbed by all these eyes fixed on her and the rough laughter, summons up strength enough to defy Jarno and refuse to dance. He takes a stick from one of the gipsies, and as Mignon still refuses in spite of his threats:





he raises his stick to beat her; but as he does so, Lothario runs to her and throws his arms protectingly around her. Jarno thrusts the old man back angrily and is again about to chastise Mignon when Wilhelm, who has just appeared upon the scene followed by a servant carrying his portmanteau, throws himself on the gipsy and holds back his arm. He induces Jarno to see reason by presenting a pistol at his head, while Philina pitches him her purse; Jarno finds both arguments irresistible.

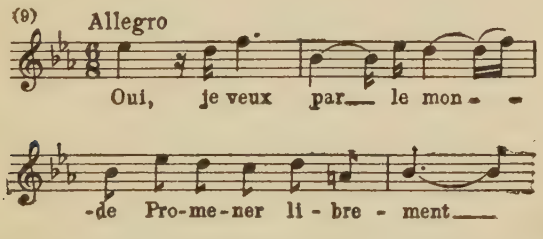
Mignon divides her bouquet in two, giving one half to Wilhelm and the other to Lothario in token of her gratitude; and this portion of the scene ends with a little ensemble in which Mignon, who has withdrawn a little from the others, prays to the Virgin for protection:



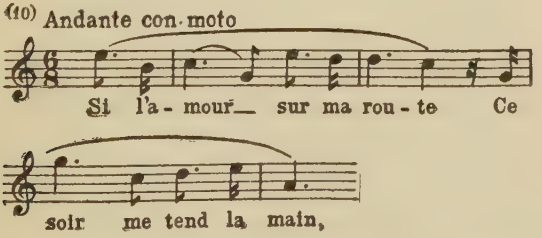
While Lothario, his eyes fixed on vacancy, describes a vision of a knight in heavy armour, on a black horse, whom he apparently sees in a forest at night, Wilhelm speaks of the strangeness of the adventure that has just befallen him, Philina betrays a lively interest in the handsome young stranger, and Laertes twits her upon her curiosity. Lothario and the chorus go off at the back, Jarno and the gipsies, accompanied by Mignon, making their way to the shed at the right. Philina points to Wilhelm and says something to Laertes, whereupon the latter descends by the outer staircase of the inn and accosts Wilhelm, Philina meanwhile retiring to her room.

Laertes, in the politest French fashion, with several changes from complete naturalness to the emphatic theatrical grand manner, introduces himself as an actor out of work. He compliments Wilhelm on his gallant defence of Mignon, and when the young man smilingly waves the compliment aside, declaring that anybody else in his place would have done as much, Laertes assures him that this is not the opinion of the charming lady who was lately on the balcony and whose name is Philina. Wilhelm in return introduces himself as a rich young man in his twentieth year, who has just left his university and is making a tour of the world.

How different Ambroise Thomas's Wilhelm is from the super-serious young hero of Goethe is shown by the aria he sings at this point:



He is his own master, he declares, and his one object in life is to go laughing through the world, singing like a joyous bird. His heart, he continues in the most urbane French manner, "is not rebellious to the sweet pleasure of love," and if the opportunity should come his way:



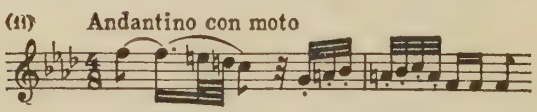
he is quite prepared for an amorous adventure, though so far he has not succeeded in meeting with his ideal. This aria is sometimes

omitted in performance, which is a pity, for it gives us the key to Wilhelm at the outset.

Laertes, in his character of a more experienced and more cynical man of the world, mock-seriously felicitates him on still possessing so many of the illusions and hopes of youth. He himself, he says, has been married and regretted it; and he warns his new friend against falling into the universal snare. He seems, however, Wilhelm ventures to remark, to be getting on very nicely with the lady on the balcony. Laertes repels the insinuation vigorously: God forbid that he should be in love with Philina; each of them knows the other too well for that! She is foolish, vain, more fickle than fortune, more changeable than the moon; but she has wit and beauty, and is altogether the most delightful demon in the world; having delivered himself of which judgment he raises his glass and toasts the lady — at Wilhelm's expense.

Philina, who has overheard this conversation, now approaches, and tapping Laertes on the shoulder with her fan, asks if he has anything to add to so charming a portrait. Brushing Laertes' description of her aside with the laughing remark that he is one of those men who profess to despise women because he knows he cannot interest them, she sets herself, in the most open manner, to fascinate Wilhelm, who, for his part, is more than half-way already towards being her slave.

While the orchestra pours out a stream of easy badinage:

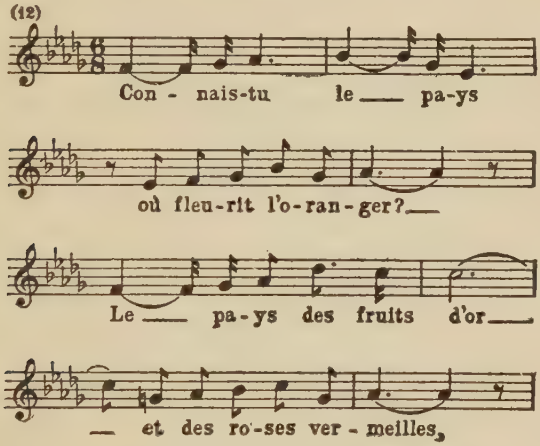


Laertes ceremoniously introduces them to each other and shows Wilhelm how to present his bouquet to Madame, and after a delightful trio Philina departs on the arm of Laertes, with a final coquettish glance at Wilhelm.

Mignon now comes out from the shed, kisses Wilhelm's hand, and thanks him for his intervention on her behalf. In reply to his many questions she tells him that the only name she has is Mignon, that she does not know her age, that she has no mother, and that "the Great Devil is dead." Of her infancy she has only one mem-

ory — of being seized one evening by rough men as she was wandering on the shores of a lake. If she were to be set free, Wilhelm asks, to what beloved country would she wend her way? This gives Mignon the cue for her simple but expressive song " Know'st thou the land? "

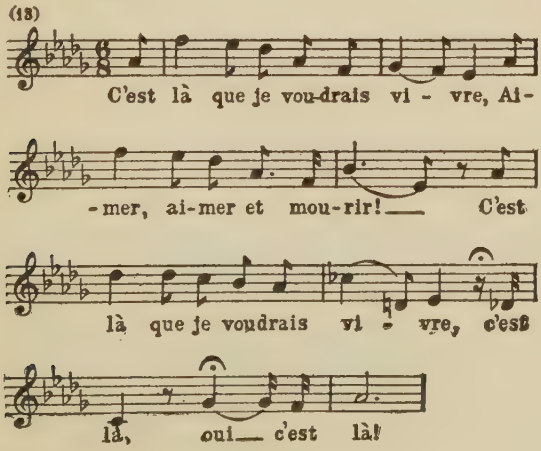
(12)



one of the most popular of operatic melodies.

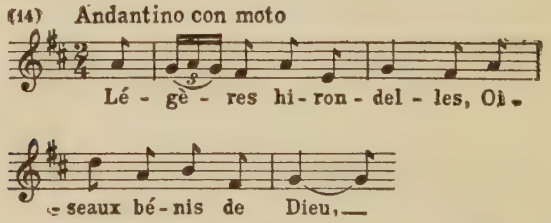
The land she would seek for, she says, is one where the sun is warmer and the sky bluer than here; it is there, she cries in the refrain of the song:

(13)



that she would like to find love and die. This enchanted land must be Italy, thinks Wilhelm; but the strange little creature can tell him nothing more.

Jarno now comes out from the shed, and after being threatened by Wilhelm consents to sell Mignon for what he paid for her. The two men go into the inn to conclude the bargain. Mignon is clapping her hands for joy when Lothario enters. He has come, he tells her, to take his leave; the swallows are flying south, and he must follow them. This gives Mignon the cue for another song. Taking the harp from Lothario, and surprising him by the dexterity with which she touches the strings, she sings a pleasant little ditty to the swallows:



in which she is afterwards joined by Lothario. From behind the scenes comes the merry laugh of Philina; Mignon, who is apparently already a little jealous of her, remarks, "That woman again!" and withdraws with Lothario into the shed.

Philina re-enters, this time with her young admirer Frederick, who has nearly killed his horse racing after her. She is keeping him at the proper distance, handling him like the accomplished coquette she is, when Wilhelm and Jarno return. When she compliments Wilhelm on his generous deed in buying Mignon, Frederick shows signs of jealousy at her obvious interest in the new-comer, and Philina, delighted to have the opportunity of playing the two men off against each other, introduces them; but before the danger can develop they are interrupted by Laertes, who runs in flourishing a letter that has arrived for Philina.

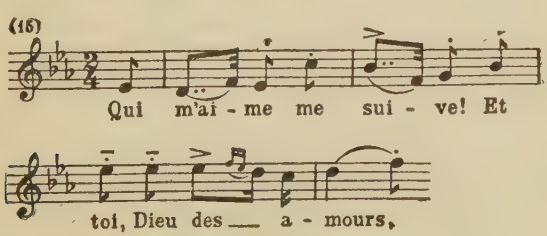
She reads it aloud to the company; it is from Frederick's uncle, Baron Rosemberg, inviting her and Laertes and the other actors to his castle to give an entertainment in honour of the visit of

Prince Ulric de Tieffembourg: the letter ends with effusive compliments to Philina, and the information that the Baron's carriage will come for her shortly, and if the charming one resists she will be carried away by force.

The offer, of course, is accepted, and Philina proposes that Wilhelm shall accompany them, assuming the rôle of author to the troupe. Having planted this new barb in the susceptible heart of Frederick she ascends the staircase and enters her room; Frederick curses her and the Baron, seizes his hat, and rushes out with a half-threat to Wilhelm. Laertes, having shaken Wilhelm's hand and advised him to accept the invitation, follows Philina.

While Wilhelm is thinking over this, Mignon returns, to place herself at the service of her benefactor. His offer to place her with some good people of the town whom he knows fills her with dismay; she suggests that she shall follow him dressed as a boy — anything so as not to be separated from him. He tells her this is impossible, whereupon she sadly turns to Lothario and declares she will go with him.

The old Harper, opening his arms, welcomes the suggestion with delight; they two will live in freedom under the open skies. He is taking Mignon away when Wilhelm, fearful of the future this opens out to the waif, declares that he will take her with him, and Mignon gives a cry of joy. Just then the actors, of both sexes, come upon the scene, accompanied by Philina, Laertes, Jarno, the other gipsies, the citizens and the peasants; and the actors, delighted at the prospect of an engagement and something to eat, take leave of the villagers in a lively chorus. Philina gaily invites anyone who loves her to follow her:

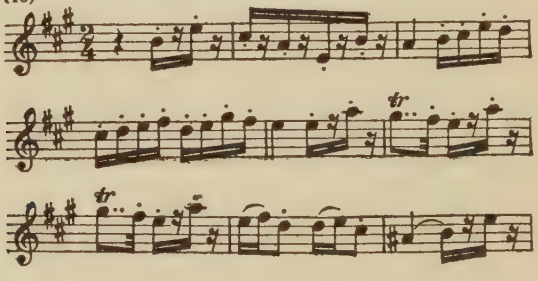


and poor little Mignon feels a pang in her heart as she recognises, in Philina's bouquet, the flowers that she herself had earlier given to Wilhelm. Wilhelm soothes her, but is obviously fascinated by Philina. Mignon takes leave of Jarno, whom she forgives for all his cruelty to her, and the scene ends with friendly adieux all round.

ACT II

Between the first and second acts there is an orchestral intermezzo, consisting of the dainty gavotte:

(16)



that has become one of the most popular numbers of the opera.

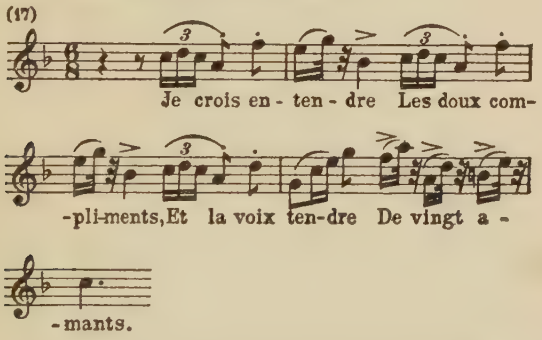
When the curtain rises we see Philina in the dressing-room allotted to her in the castle; the table is covered with flowers and letters, and Philina, who is seated at the toilette table, looking at herself in the glass, is evidently very pleased with both herself and her situation. Laertes, who enters almost immediately, is equally delighted with life; he has all the wine he wants, at someone else's expense. Philina is sure that Wilhelm will follow her; and she has hardly said so when the young man appears, followed after a little while by Mignon, whom Laertes, to his surprise, finds waiting at the door as he is going out.

He has already explained to Wilhelm that the play they are going to perform that evening is *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* by " a certain Shakespeare, quite a good poet." Philina is to be Titania, and Wilhelm is sure to be enchanted with her. " Au revoir, my dear sir! Adieu, my fair one! " says the actor as he leaves; " I leave you with him, I leave you with her."

Mignon enters, dressed as a page, and is greeted with a touch of ill-humour by the jealous Philina, who sarcastically bids her sit down and warm herself, after which she will perhaps favour them with the egg-dance. Philina professes to be vastly amused at the solicitude Wilhelm and Mignon show for each other; Mignon swallows her chagrin as best she can, while Wilhelm, answering the actress in her own tone of lively banter, offers her his services. At her command he brings her the candelabra from the chimney-piece and places it on her toilette table, where she seats herself and proceeds to embellish herself for the evening, Mignon meanwhile watching them both gloomily without stirring from her seat.

Philina is looking forward ecstatically:

(17)

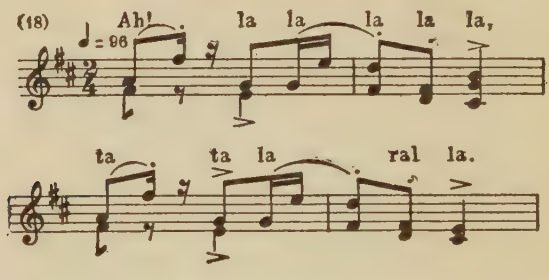


to her success, the general admiration, the compliments of old and young. Wilhelm tries to draw a serious expression of love from her, but she only fences with him, showing him a bracelet that has been given her by the Prince, and offering to present him to the Baron. Wilhelm presses a kiss upon her hand, whereupon Mignon, who has been feigning sleep, betrays herself to her rival by a start.

Philina goes out on Wilhelm's arm, and Mignon, left to herself, and being the heroine of a light, not a serious, opera, comes to the conclusion that it is foolish to repine, and that the best thing she can do is to submit and make the best of the situation.

She examines with great interest the lovely furniture and fittings of the room, and innocently assumes that the secret of Philina's

charm must be in the pots and bottles on her toilette table. She gets rid of her paleness by putting on some rouge, and is so pleased with the effect that she breaks out into a little song about a poor gipsy lad who, though he wears a smile, is sad at heart because his master does not appreciate him: the song is called a "styrienne" and has a characteristic gipsy refrain:



Like Marguerite in *Faust* she cannot believe that the new face she sees in the glass is hers; and, no doubt by way of contrast between her present state and her past, she sings the bagpipe air (No. 3) to which the gipsies made their first appearance in the opera.

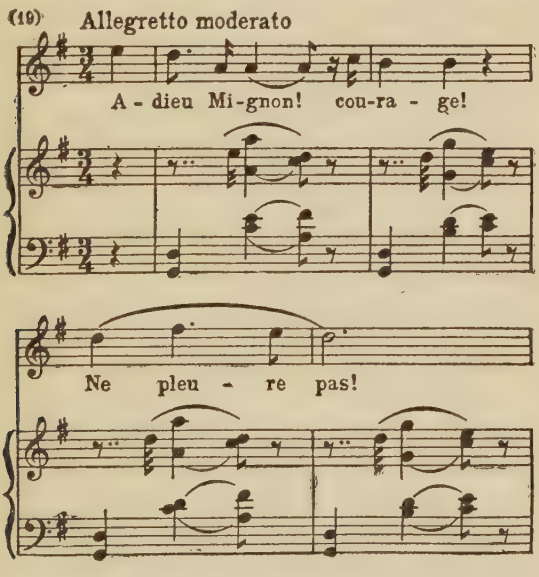
But no, she concludes sadly on looking at herself in the glass again, she is still not Philina; the actress must have other secrets than these to make herself so beautiful. May not the secret be in her dresses? for Mignon reflects that, for Wilhelm, she herself is hardly a woman. She goes into a cabinet on the left that evidently contains Philina's clothes, just as Frederick enters hastily through the window. The charming air that follows, in which Frederick, to the tune of the gavotte (No. 16), sighs out, like another Cherubino, the desires of his half-awakened amorous little heart, was added to the original score for Madame Trebelli when the opera was produced in London.

Wilhelm enters in search of Mignon. The young man and the boy, each of whom is astonished and irritated to find the other in Philina's room, soon get at cross-purposes and have just commenced a duel when Mignon, dressed in one of Philina's robes, rushes between them, guarding her master. Frederick is greatly

amused at the sight; magnanimously refusing to distress the girl by putting an end to Wilhelm's life, he spares his rival for the present, and goes out laughing.

Wilhelm is grateful to Mignon for the anxiety she has shown on his account, but having now seen her in a woman's dress he explains to her very seriously that the situation has become a little delicate; he cannot very well keep a young person of this kind about him as a page, and in spite of her mournful query, " Then you would send me away? " and her bitter suggestion that it is at the wish of Philina, he persists that he will have to take her elsewhere, where she will be well looked after. She throws herself disconsolately into a chair, and, in a gracefully tender little air:

(19) Allegretto moderato



he bids farewell and counsels her not to weep, for Heaven will protect her; no doubt she will find her country and her family again, and with them the road to happiness; as for himself, he will preserve the tenderest recollection of her, and will hope that some day they will meet again.

If they must part, she replies mournfully, she prefers to be

free again. She will go back to her old life and her gipsy clothes, becoming Mignon once more; God and the Angels will protect her, and she will dance for her crusts. He offers her his purse, but this she declines, asking nothing of him but that he will give her his hand to kiss in farewell.

Philina returns, accompanied by Frederick, who has told her, as a great joke, of Mignon's escapade. The actress ironically compliments Mignon on her newly-acquired style, and offers, as the dress suits her so well, to give it her; whereupon Mignon first of all angrily tears the ribbons from it, and then, bursting with rage, runs back into the cabinet. Philina ironically remarks that anyone would think the child was jealous of her — a remark that sets Wilhelm thinking. But just then Laertes, to the strain of the gavotte, comes in dressed for the play as Prince Theseus, and calls them to the theatre, where the performance is about to begin.

Wilhelm, still turning the word "jealous" over in his mind, offers his arm to Philina and leads her out; Frederick, following them with his eyes, declares that he would willingly assassinate his fortunate rival. He is not the only one who is animated by these amiable sentiments: Mignon, returning dressed in her boy's clothes, rushes away crying, "That Philina! How I hate her!"

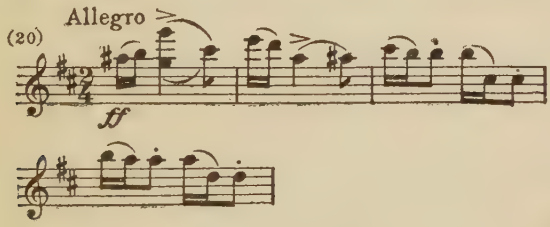
The next scene shows us a part of the park adjoining the Baron's castle. On the left is a lake, on the right a conservatory lit up from within. Music and applause are heard behind the scenes. Mignon, advancing from among the trees, listens to these sounds and soliloquises upon her unhappy lot: she is alone and unhappy, while her detested rival is basking in the smiles of the man she loves. She sees the lake, and its tranquillity attracts her; she will seek eternal peace beneath its waters.

She is just about to throw herself in when from behind the trees comes the sound of a harp, and the thought of the old Harper and his affection for her recalls her to life. She addresses Lothario by his name. The old man, looking at her tenderly, asks, "Is it thou, Sperata?" "No," she replies; and Lothario, repulsing her gently, finds that he has been deceived again, for this is only the child who wanted to follow him — Mignon. The two

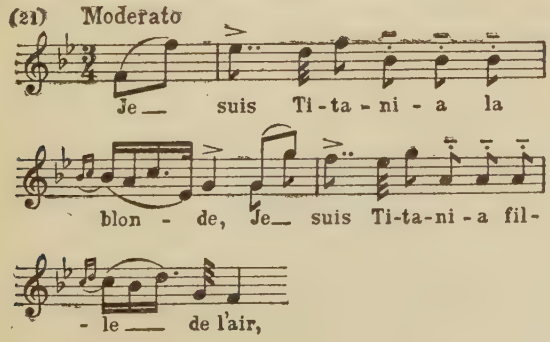
unhappy creatures pour out their woes to each other in a tenderly expressive little duet.

A clapping of hands that comes from the theatre behind the scenes turns Mignon into a fury. Why, she asks in her frenzy, does not God strike the detested Philina with His thunder, and destroy this hated palace with fire? She rushes away among the trees, leaving the dangerous word "fire" ringing through the half-crazed mind of the old Harper. Repeating the word after her in a bewildered sort of way, he leaves the stage just as the door of the conservatory opens and the theatrical audience and the actors come forth, accompanied by Philina, Frederick, the Prince, the Baron, and the Baroness.

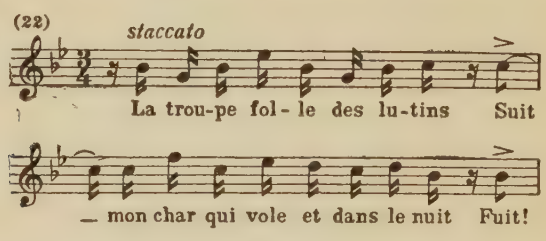
The performance has been a triumph for Philina, and all crowd round her, offering their congratulations in a sparkling chorus:



Philina takes their homage as a matter of course. Yes, she says, for this evening she is indeed Titania, the Queen of the Fairies, and — pointing to her magic wand — this is her golden sceptre, and these — showing her wreaths — are her trophies; and she breaks out into a brilliant vocal Polonaise:



the difficulty of which may be gauged from a note in the score to the effect that "if the singer finds it impossible to sing the Polonaise, a cut must be made to the finale." The aria abounds with technical difficulties of all sorts, and has a sprightly middle section, describing the will-o'-the-wisps following Titania's chariot, that gives opportunities for light staccato singing:



Her Polonaise finished Philina turns to Wilhelm and coquettishly reproaches him with having neglected her during the evening; her chief object seems to be to kindle the jealousy of Frederick again, which she soon succeeds in doing. Wilhelm, however, is preoccupied and uneasy; he tells Philina that he has been looking everywhere in vain for Mignon, and the actress, with the pouting comment, "So she whom you were seeking, sir, was not I?" takes the young man on one side.

The librettists now apparently think it is time to make use, after their own fashion, of the episode of the fire in which the Harper was concerned in Goethe's story. Coming close to Mignon, Lothario whispers to her that she can not be happy; her wish has been fulfilled; he has lit the fire that will bring the castle down in ruins. Mignon has only time for an ejaculation of incredulous horror when Wilhelm and Philina return; and the latter, in order to get rid of Mignon, asks her to prove her zeal by going into the theatre and bringing her the bouquet she has left there — the bouquet given her by Wilhelm. The young man protests, but Mignon, apparently thinking it is his wish that she should go, hastens to the conservatory.

She has hardly left the stage when Laertes rushes in with the

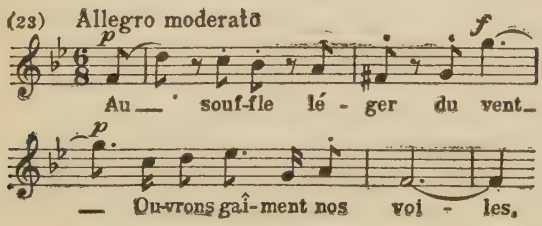
announcement that the theatre is in flames. All give a cry of horror; even Philina is for a moment sobered; while Wilhelm hurries after Mignon, in spite of the efforts of Laertes to hold him back. The servants take away the torches they had brought with them when the company flocked on the scene, so that the stage is now dark, and the red flames of the fire are seen licking the glass panes of the conservatory.

Through the general commotion Lothario tries to make himself heard with a repetition of the song with which he made his first appearance in the opera, declaring that he is convinced his long-lost one lives, and that it is time for him to wander off again in search of her. The glass of the conservatory falls in with a great crash, and shortly after Wilhelm reappears panting, carrying the fainting Mignon in his arms; he had reached her, it seems, just as the flames were seizing on her. He places her on a bank; in her hands she clutches the little bouquet of withered flowers. All give a great cry of " Saved! " and the curtain falls.

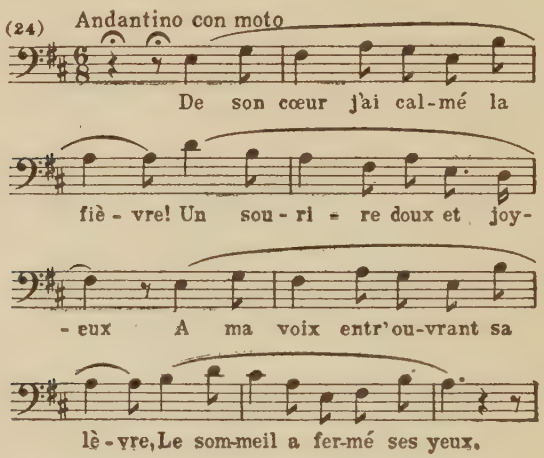
ACT III

In the third act we see the French librettists taking up Goethe's various loose threads and tying them in a way that is decidedly their own.

Apparently Mignon has been brought by Wilhelm to Italy to recover from the effects of her adventure in the blazing conservatory. We see a gallery containing statues; to the right is a window overlooking the landscape, and at the back a closed door. Outside is heard a pleasantly melodious chorus:



of people about to embark upon a placid sea. Lothario enters and sings a gentle cradle-song:

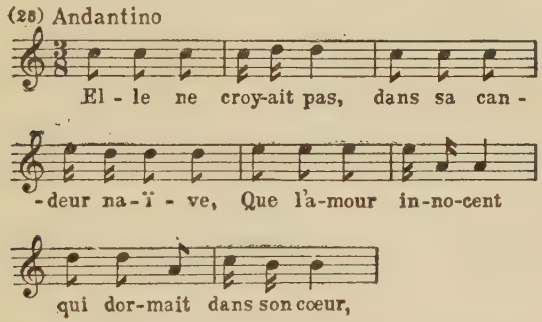

(24) Andantino con moto
De son cœur j'ai cal-mé la
fiè - vre! Un sou - ri - re doux et joy-
- eux A ma voix entr'ou-vrant sa
lè - vre, Le som-meil a fer-mé ses yeux.

for Mignon, who, her fever relieved, has at last fallen asleep in an adjoining room. Wilhelm enters with a servant carrying a lamp.

Turning to the window, the servant explains, for Wilhelm's benefit and ours, that the next day there is to be a festival on the lake, and that alone among the houses of the neighborhood the palace in which they now stand will not be illuminated. For it has a tragic history: years ago the child of the house was drowned, the mother died, and the father, crazed with grief, left Italy for ever. The house is for sale, and if it suits Wilhelm he can buy it. Dismissing the servant with the remark that he will give his decision tomorrow, Wilhelm turns to Lothario and expresses his joy at the favourable turn in Mignon's health, which he puts down to her having been brought back to her native air. To-morrow, he says, he will buy for her this Cipriani palace.

At the word "Cipriani" Lothario gives a start; then he advances towards the great door at the back of the scene, and tries to open it. That room, Wilhelm explains to him, has been closed for fifteen years. Lothario repeats the words after him as if dazed, then, turning towards a door on the left, passes through it with the

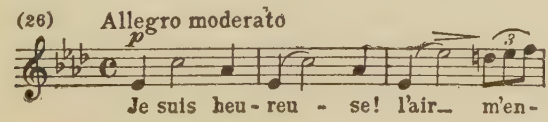
air of a man who has suddenly remembered something. Wilhelm, who cannot understand his strange actions, opens the door on the other side and contemplates the sleeping Mignon. From the graceful little song he sings:

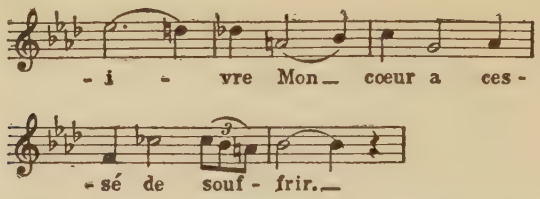


we learn that Mignon has become conscious of the love that previously was only an unconscious stirring within her; but she is apparently somewhat frightened of him, and will tell him nothing of the cause of her secret sorrow. He can only hope for the spring and the sunshine to open her heart to him.

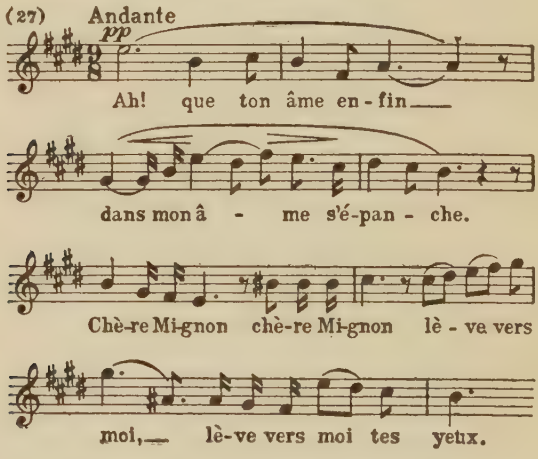
He is interrupted by the servant bringing him a letter, which Wilhelm reads aloud. It is from Laertes: "Philina follows you; fly — already she is here!" the melody of "Know'st thou the land?" (No. 12) is heard softly in the orchestra as Mignon comes in from the room on the right; she does not see Wilhelm, who has withdrawn a little. The convalescent girl rejoices in the beauty and warmth around her. But the place stirs old memories in her; surely she has seen something like this before in her dreams? She gives an appealing cry of "Lothario! Wilhelm!"

Her lover runs to her; she throws herself into his arms, and sings of her new-found happiness:





She no longer fears death, she says: and Wilhelm taking up her words, bids her live for love; she must drive from her memory for ever the recollection of the old unhappy days:



But she still cannot believe that he loves her: is not his heart given to Philina? He has no sooner assured her that he has never loved Philina, and that she is far away from them, when the voice of the coquette is heard outside singing the showy "I am Titania" (No. 21). Mignon's jealousy flames out once more, and is apparently exasperated by the confident coloratura in which Philina keeps indulging outside.

In vain Wilhelm tries to console Mignon; she falls in a faint, and on recovering consciousness still refuses to be convinced. The only one who loves her, she says, is Lothario, whose footsteps she declares she hears in the room at the back.

Wilhelm assures her that nobody can possibly be there, but he has no sooner spoken than Lothario appears on the threshold of the open door. He is transformed; he is dressed in rich black velvet, and carries in his hand a small coffer. Advancing slowly, he gives the astonished Wilhelm " greeting to this my house," and, informing him that he was once the master of this splendid palace — a statement which Wilhelm attributes to the derangement of his intellect — he hands Mignon the casket, bidding her open it. She does so, and finds in it a child's scarf, embroidered with gold and silver. It was, Lothario tells her, Sperata's and the name arouses vague memories in Mignon.

Searching the casket again, she finds first of all a coral bracelet that is now too small for her arm, though, Lothario tells her, it was once too large for the little Sperata. Then Mignon finds at the bottom of the casket a prayer-book, from which, says Lothario, Sperata was accustomed to spell out her evening prayer.

Reading from the book, Mignon begins with clasped hands a prayer to the Virgin, but soon, to the astonishment of Lothario, she lets the book fall and continues from memory. In wild exaltation she cries to them to tell her where she is. " In Italy," replies Wilhelm. The name recalls further memories to her, and running into the room at the back she cries that the picture of her mother is hanging there.

She and Lothario throw themselves into each other's arms with ejaculations of " My daughter! " — " My father! " and the three voices blend in a cry of joy. But the still frail body almost gives way under its happiness: Mignon faints again, Wilhelm opens a window, and as the orchestra softly gives out the theme of " Know'st thou the land," he confesses his love. She takes up the refrain of the song, " Ah, 'tis there I would live, 'tis there I would love and die! " It is to this melody, worked up into a little trio, and followed by a brief coda, that the opera ends.

ERNEST NEWMAN

is securely established as the most influential and widely read critic of music on either side of the Atlantic. In London, where he is music critic of The Sunday Times, *his weekly article is eagerly read and discussed by thousands. In America his renown was increased by his visit in 1924–1925 as guest critic of the* New York Evening Post. *His books on music have long enjoyed a success which is truly astonishing; Mr. Carl Van Vechten put his finger on its source when he wrote:*

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